

THE

SAILOR BOY.

A NOVEL.

O

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

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A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

“The seal of Providence is sure upon thee,
“And thou wert born for yet unheard-of wonders.”

OTWAY.

“Forti nil difficile.”

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VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1800.

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CHAP. I.

CAPTAIN BLOOMFIELD, upon his return from Paris (whither he had been upon business), in the month of September of the year 1792, was met by a most riotous mob, consisting of the *Peuple Souverain*, at the entrance of the town of Boulogne, who, in terms not the most courteous, demanded his passport? who he was? where he was going? &c. The Captain had been too much accustomed to the manners of these sovereign rulers, during his short residence in France, to feel any degree of alarm; and attributed, very justly, their excessive

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insolence to the elegance of his travelling carriage—a circumstance of itself sufficient to subject the owner to many insults, as it militated against their favourite doctrine of equality; though, had they known he had purchased this elegant equipage at a very reduced price, and really travelled in it through motives of economy, as it was the cheapest method of conveying it to England, they might have treated him with rather more indulgence; for Captain Bloomfield, though possessed of superior talents at the head of his profession, and generally both esteemed and admired, was by no means rich.

He was, at the time our history commences, about five-and-thirty; a fine manly figure, and generally wore the undress uniform of a naval officer, being particularly partial to that costume. He had more than once repented his cheap bargain before he reached Boulogne, as the superior elegance of his carriage had subjected him to many more enquiries, and his figure and passport

passport to much severer scrutiny than he had undergone during his journey to Paris, which he had performed with the messenger, or courier, who conducted the mail. Unfortunately, he was but imperfectly acquainted with the French language; many of his speeches were therefore misconstrued by his present interrogators, who made a point of making out every body but themselves were in the wrong: he was therefore soon pulled out of his chaise, under pretence of searching under the seat for any Aristocrat he might have thus concealed, or for any treasures he might be endeavouring to smuggle out of the land of liberty. The Captain did not entertain a doubt of being permitted to pursue his way to an inn as soon as they had gratified their curiosity; therefore made but little resistance, and used the most conciliatory words his vocabulary afforded him, by no means wishing to irritate such a band of ruffians; when unfortunately, one of those disciples of Roberspierre, with that true ferocity which characterized their leader,

demanded the key of his *port-feuille*. The Captain protested he had no such thing in his possession, upon which he was immediately assailed with the most opprobrious epithets; this lawless set having actually mistaken the step of the chaise, which was not let down, and faced with red Morocco, for the *port-feuille* in question; and as, owing to the carriage having stood by for some time, the hinges went very stiff, they therefore persisted there was some secret spring they could not discover. So absurd an accusation flung the Captain quite off his guard, and he burst into a violent fit of laughter while he unfolded the step, which had afforded them so excellent an opportunity of displaying their superior talents for exercising the self-created office of inspectors, which they had assumed. His mirth, however, so exasperated these wise gentlemen, that he was immediately ordered to prison; and to expostulate was as vain as it was useless:—he was hurried, indeed scarcely permitted to speak, with the bitterest imprecations, to
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the town-house, now more frequently used as a prison, and there forced into a room already crowded with people, who had, like himself, been unfortunate enough to offend the then rulers of the kingdom; as this had chanced to be one of the many days of riot and confusion which had so frequently, since the Revolution, prevailed in France.

Never had Captain Bloomfield found himself in a more awkward or uncomfortable situation, as none of his fellow-prisoners seemed to entertain the least hope of obtaining either justice, or a speedy liberation. One person was magistrate to-day, they informed him, and another on the morrow; what an honest man endeavoured to establish, a rascal immediately overthrew; therefore anarchy, riot, and confusion were the order of the day, and particularly agreeable to the lower classes, who had an opportunity of enforcing their maxims of equality, and of depriving their superiors of that liberty they affected to idolize.

Two parties had been for some time contending for supreme power; and those likely to make the worst use of it, had finally succeeded in establishing their empire. Their Monarch had, in consequence, been imprisoned, and the slightest marks of commiseration for his fate, were sure to expose even the most zealous partizan for their imaginary liberty to the same misfortune.

For two hours, or more, Captain Bloomfield sat revolving various plans, unable to fix upon any, when his reverie was disturbed by a fresh bustle upon the stairs leading to the room where he was confined; and he began to feel his way towards the door, in hopes he might obtain permission to enter upon his defence, though he rather flattered himself the noise he heard was the forerunner of his emancipation. Before, however, he had advanced three steps towards the door, it flew open with violence; and before it closed again with the same rapidity, he caught sight of a young lad, whose
head

head appeared tied up, and who was forced into the room with such violence, after staggering a few steps, he heard him (for he could no longer distinguish objects) fall upon the floor. The horror he felt, effectually prevented his intended application to the feelings of wretches, dead to every sentiment of humanity.

For some moments profound silence reigned among his companions in misery. The first sentence he heard uttered, was in very good English—"Merciful God, deliver me from this savage race, or at once put a period to my existence!"—The Captain mentally seconded the first part of a prayer, that he was convinced had been offered to the throne of mercy by the youth who had so lately increased the number of prisoners, and who continued extended upon the floor where he had fallen. He might be a countryman, the Captain thought, in which case he should probably be able to afford him some consolation; he therefore walked towards the spot, from whence

the sound proceeded, treading with the utmost caution, and warning his fellow-prisoners to take care.—“Am I deceived,” he exclaimed, when he thought himself near the youth, “or was it not an Englishman who was last brought in?”

A deep sigh was the only answer he received; he stooped down, and felt for the person he had addressed, who had crawled, and had laid himself next the wall. By his movement and sighs, the Captain soon found him, and took hold of his hand, which he pressed very fervently, again repeating, “Surely you are an Englishman?” The youth sighed out, “Yes;” adding, “I believe I am dying!”

“Barbarous wretches!” exclaimed the humane Bloomfield, “they seem neither to respect age nor sex; but take courage, young man—we must be liberated ere long,” instantly seating himself, and taking the invalid’s head upon his lap, who made no resistance, but panted as it were for breath, and scarcely evinced he existed, but by his sighs;

fighs; while the benevolent Captain desired him to put himself in the most easy posture their situation would admit, and had soon the pleasure to find his *protégée* had fallen into a slumber, though he frequently started, and at times moaned as if in pain. Bloomfield sat very uncomfortably; but was so fearful of disturbing the youth, he seldom ventured to ease himself by moving in any manner likely to awake him.

Daylight at last dawned through the prison windows, which were secured by double iron bars, and he was able to distinguish the features of a dozen or more fellow-prisoners, whose looks and appearance bespoke them to be French; he therefore felt far less interested in their fate, than in that of the unknown youth, his countryman. The Captain, whose dress and appearance led most of them to suppose him a man of rank, was now flattered with hopes of a speedy release;—they only wished they were of his nation, and even ventured to enquire his address in London, where they hoped to

see him again, and congratulate him and themselves, from having escaped out of the clutches of these modern Goths and Vandals.

Fully appreciating the motives which induced his companions to treat him with such politeness, he rather encouraged the notion they seemed to have formed of his consequence, in hopes it might contribute to his enlargement ;—but his attention was soon drawn to another object ; the youth he was so tenderly supporting, after a few uneasy struggles, raised his head, and met the eyes of his benevolent friend. His surprise was very visible, and he continued to gaze till the Captain asked him how he found himself.

“ Where am I ? ” were his first words, putting his right-hand to his forehead. “ Pray Sir, are you an Englishman ? ”

“ I am, my young friend.”

“ Well, I dreamt as much ; I thought I heard somebody talk to me in English :—but am not I in a prison ?—Oh yes, these windows confirm my suspicions.”

“ You

" You certainly are, like myself, at present in confinement ; but tell me, are you an English boy ?"

" Yes indeed, Sir," pausing, and fixing his eyes very stedfastly upon the Captain, till a violent flood of tears relieved his bursting heart."

" Never mind, my good lad ; cheer up ; only have a good heart—I hope we shall soon be both at liberty. You have friends in the town of Boulogne, I presume ?"

" No, indeed, Sir," was the reply, and his tears redoubled. " I had but one friend in the world," he sobbed out, " and him I saw murdered four days ago ;—would to Heaven I had shared his fate !"

" Never give way to despair, my lad ; you are reserved for better things, and ought to rejoice, instead of repine, at the dispensations of Providence. But you had better get up, and stretch your legs ; you must feel very chilly and uncomfortable from having slept upon this cold floor."

“ Oh Sir! I should have been dead before now, if it had not been for you; I wish I knew how to make you amends!”

“ We will talk of that another time,” replied the Captain, assisting him to rise, for he was very weak and faint. He then led him to one of the windows, to take a more minute survey of his person; his manner of address, and the feeling he had displayed, having greatly interested him in his favour. He appeared about fourteen, was tall, and very well made for a youth of that age; but was so covered with dirt, it was next to impossible either to distinguish his features, or the colour of his cloaths, and his forehead was nearly concealed with a large bloody rag; his hair was also matted with filth and blood, which, together with the uncouth bandage that surrounded his head, rendered him rather a disgusting than an interesting object. Nevertheless, Captain Bloomfield was very anxious to know something more about him, and to learn whether he could be of any

any further service to him, and how he was thus wounded. After looking at him for a moment, he said, "You seem to have received an ugly cut or blow upon your forehead, poor boy; has any thing been done to it?"

"No, Sir, but it is very painful."

"How did you receive it?" demanded the Captain.

"I really do not know, Sir; I received it four days ago, when my only friend was murdered by my side. I believe I was also left for dead; but when I came to myself, I left the town unnoticed, and hoped to have reached England, without falling in with any more of the demagogues who now rule in France."

This brief account by no means satisfied Captain Bloomfield; but perceiving none of the other prisoners understood English, he desired the youth to tell him who he really was, and assured him he would do every thing in his power to serve him, adding, "If I can procure you your liberty, which I flatter myself I shall be able to do, you shall

shall accompany me to England. There, since you meant to proceed thither, I suppose you have friends, though the sanguinary monsters, who disgrace the very cause they are attempting to establish, have deprived you of the one you probably, and with reason, esteemed the most? But for what offence were you brought hither at midnight?"

Disfigured as it was by dirt and blood, the Captain perceived something very interesting in the lad's countenance; a sort of innate sense of rectitude gave lustre to his fine dark eyes, while he said, "I am sure, Sir, you must think me a very bad boy; but indeed I have not deserved the rigorous treatment I have undergone. Our Professors offended the mob, so they vowed vengeance against the whole College."

"What College, my lad? Where did you come from; and how came you, an English boy, to be in France during these troublesome times, if you have no relations in the country?"

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The youth appeared confused, and for some time remained silent, the tears chasing each other down his cheeks in quick succession. At last he said, "All I can tell you about myself, I will, Sir; but there are things I never will reveal; I would sooner follow my dear deceased friend to the grave; he knew why I have imposed silence upon myself, and approved of my motive;—he, however, is no more, and I have now no one left at all likely to assist me; but I am tall enough now to enter for a soldier, if I could but get to England—that is what I mean to do."

"To hear a youth of your age talking thus," rejoined the Captain, "greatly surprises me. What secret can you have which you fancy it necessary to conceal? I am fearful you have been badly advised. How long have you been in France?"

"Two years, Sir;—I lost all my friends in England at that period; and a distant relation of my mother's, who was a Professor belonging to the English College at Douai, offered

offered to instruct me *gratis*, if I would come over to him. I did as he desired, and he, as I have already told you, was murdered four days ago, because he wrote something against the Republicans. I fought in his defence as long as I was able; but I was either cut or knocked down at last, and when I recovered my senses, it being early in the morning, I left the town, and thought I would try to reach Boulogne, where I landed when I came over, and fancied I could find that road without much difficulty. But I dared not pursue my journey by day; so when I found my way into this town late last night, I meant to have proceeded to the water-side, and to have got on board the first English vessel that would have received me;—however, I was soon stopped, and dragged to this prison, where I should certainly have died, but for your kindness in supporting me during the night. And now, Sir, I have told you every thing I conceive I am at liberty to reveal respecting myself. My name is Edward Fortescue;

Fortescue; and if you can procure my release, my gratitude will have no bounds."

Captain Bloomfield had heard that the Professors of Douai had ventured to remonstrate, with more spirit than prudence, against the present order of things in France; he therefore was not at all surprised to learn that some of them had fallen victims to their well-meant zeal.

"But why did not you return to your College, my lad, after your friend's death?" he enquired.

"My relation and myself had been among the last to quit it, Sir. I knew its walls would no longer afford me an asylum. We had intended to proceed to England, but were most miserably prevented, and I saw no one I knew when I recovered my senses; nor did I know, had I been so inclined, to whom to apply for relief. I therefore bent my steps, as I told you before, towards England."

"Yet you have no relations there, I think I understood?"

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The youth made no reply ; the Captain was therefore convinced he had some very cogent reason for being thus reserved, particularly at such a moment ; and ceased to press him upon the subject, though his pity was rather increased by this artless tale. He could not help fancying he descended from a good family, as the Professors he alluded to were all men of some rank, whose religion forced them to seek an asylum abroad ; and he presumed the youth was also a Catholic, in which case he would not be permitted to serve his country in either the military or naval line, which he hinted to him as an objection to his project of insisting into the land service.

“ I was brought up a Protestant, Sir ; and as my late relation wished me to go into the English Navy, he never even tried to convert me. We had a vast many boarders who were Protestants, as well as myself.”

“ I am glad to hear it. In what part of England were you born ?”

“ In

“ In the north, Sir, and was some years at a school in Yorkshire previous to my coming to France.”

Captain Bloomfield found he was very averse to entering into any particulars, likely to lead to a discovery of his family, who, he began to suppose, had met with some misfortunes this youth had been forbid to mention; therefore he rather admired, than condemned, the reserve he maintained, determined to procure his release, if either arguments or bribes had any effect upon the wretches, misnamed magistrates, upon whose pleasure, he presumed, it must depend; and to take him with him to London, from whence he might write to some acquaintance, where he should have it in his power to put him into a method of getting his bread, without suffering him to enlist for a soldier, as he had intended. He therefore became anxious to have his wounds dressed, and to procure him some refreshment, which he stood very much in need of, having only a few *sous* in his pocket when

when he left Douai, which he had laid out in bread, the only sustenance he had taken for the last four days.

To attend, however, either to the health, wants, or comforts of the prisoners, was far beneath these new champions for liberty; it was therefore near eleven in the forenoon before their prison door was opened, and refreshments offered to those who had money to purchase them. The Captain was the first served, and readily procured some very tolerable bread and wine, and a small quantity of brandy. He instantly offered some of the former to the young Edward, who had already devoured the really tempting rolls with his eyes before one was put into his hands; and the satisfaction his benefactor felt, in having been thus able to relieve a countryman in such distress, more than compensated for the short confinement he had undergone, and the chagrin this unnecessary delay of his journey had at first occasioned him.

Having

Having allowed the youth to make a hearty meal, the Captain turned to the officer upon duty, who had entered the prison with the people who had brought the provisions, and asked him if he knew why he was thus confined—when he should be taken before the magistrates, or whoever was appointed to see justice properly and impartially administered?”

The officer had nothing to do in the business; it was only his duty to suffer no one to escape.

“Then provide me with pen, ink, and paper, that I may address the Governor of your town in writing.”

That was contrary to the orders he had received.

“At all events you may carry them a verbal message, I should suppose; therefore, please to tell them I am in the naval service of Great Britain, whose Monarch is not accustomed to permit any of his subjects to be wantonly insulted in any country; and I have been imprisoned by a riotous mob,
merely

merely because I could not find a key to the step of my carriage, which those wise enforcers of your new laws chose to dignify with the name of my *port-feuille*; therefore please to tell whoever commands in Boulogne, that I expect to have a speedy hearing before the business becomes more serious, and bid them recollect they act under a superior Power, who will have to answer for their misconduct, though I cannot say as yet I have any right to complain of their injustice: but should they neglect my appeal to their understandings, after you have stated my case to them, their neglect may be attended with very serious consequences even to the French nation."

This spirited harangue made some impression upon the person to whom it was addressed, and he promised to make the Captain's situation known to the present rulers of the town without delay, adding, "they were really so fully employed in endeavouring to quell and restrain the mob, it

it was no very easy matter to procure a private audience with any of them."

Bloomfield gave him credit for the truth of his last assertion.—Having ate a roll, and drank a couple of glasses of wine himself, as soon as the people had left the room, he desired Edward to kneel down at one of the windows, while he washed and cleaned the wound in his head with the brandy he had procured for that purpose; he then bound it up with his pocket handkerchief, understanding the bandage he had removed, had been torn from the youth's shirt, and applied by himself to staunch the blood.

Thus refreshed in every respect, the drooping lad grew quite animated; his looks were far more expressive than his words; "he was now convinced," he told his kind benefactor, "thanks to his generous humanity, he should see England once more."

"You were intended for the Navy, I think you gave me to understand, had your late protector lived?" said the Captain.

"Yes,

“Yes, Sir, it has ever been my wish to serve my King and country in some way or other, and I was particularly partial to your profession : I have therefore been very anxious to obtain a little nautical skill. I once had hopes,” he continued, a faint blush tinging his pallid cheeks, “of rising in that line, but they have long ceased ;—however, if I could not get into the service, as I once hoped, I may, by adding practice to theory, and being unremitting in my application, in time obtain the command of a fishing boat, you know, Sir.

The Captain perceived he was rather more ambitious than he chose to acknowledge, and secretly applauded his spirit, while he asked, “how, partial as he declared himself to be to the sea service, he had ever thought of bearing a musket ?”

“I considered it as my last resource, Sir ; I have been told it is a difficult matter for boys to be taken on board men of war without a recommendation, and I have lost the

the only friend from whom I could have expected such a favour."

In such discourse, and listening to the lamentations of their fellow-sufferers, the day wore away. Towards evening another guard entered their prison with more provisions. The Captain questioned the commanding Officer, who was not the one by whom he had sent the message to the magistrates, and had no doubt, from his reply, and the respectful treatment he received, that his adventure had been pretty well canvassed over in the town, among both high and low;—still, as he did not understand any steps had been taken for his immediate liberation, he was obliged to have recourse to patience, and, upon hearing the clock of a neighbouring church strike ten, he lost all hopes of being released before morning. He was therefore consoling the young Edward, and consulting with him how they must arrange themselves for the night, when their prison door was once

more thrown open, and three magistrates, in their municipal scarfs, and other insignia, made their appearance. Each prisoner was in hopes they came to announce his release; till one of the shabby *trio*, for such, notwithstanding their badges of office, they literally were, demanded whether there was not an English naval Officer among them.

Captain Bloomfield immediately stepped forward.—“I am a subject of the King of Great-Britain, gentlemen, and have faithfully served my Royal Master these three-and-twenty years, who has far more than recompensed me for my feeble efforts to maintain the glory of the British flag. I presume you have heard for what crime I have been imprisoned, in what, I have a right to think, you have misnamed the land of liberty.”

“We are really at a loss how to apologize for the treatment you have undergone,” replied one of the three, “but the best intentioned people are liable to make
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mistakes, you know, Sir. The moment we heard your grievances properly stated, we hastened to make every atonement in our power, by immediately setting you at liberty. Suffer us to have the honour of conducting you to the British Hotel, where you will find your carriage and baggage, which has neither been touched nor examined."

The Captain was perfectly satisfied when he found he had rendered these newly created Republicans rather more humble; but he had the cause of another to plead before he could think of leaving the prison. His young countryman stood close to his elbow; he therefore requested these Municipal Officers would inform him of what crime this youth stood accused?

"They really could not resolve his question."

The Captain proceeded to tell them what time he had been brought in, and how he had been frightened from Douai, where his parents, with whom he was intimately acquainted, had sent him for his education;

and protested he did not know whether he would survive a much longer imprisonment, as the wound he had received, had never yet been examined by a surgeon; and he farther hoped, if it was thought prudent for him to travel, he would be allowed to leave France with him, as every thing that could be alledged against him, was his having, through fear, quitted Douai without a passport;—they would therefore greatly oblige him by granting his request, in the first place, to allow him to take the youth to his inn, adding, he would be answerable for his appearance in the morning, if required.”

Since the young man's father was a friend of Captain Bloomfield's, there could be no doubt of the truth of every thing he had advanced in his defence. His quitting Douai so imprudently, was perfectly accounted for, as was his imprisonment, from his not having been able to procure a passport; therefore, though they were really sorry the young man had been so material a sufferer, they

they could not so much blame those who had taken upon themselves to confine him, as they had merely acted in obedience to the laws; but he was now at liberty to accompany the Captain wherever he chose.

Edward, unable to speak, could only forcibly press his benefactor's hand, as they left their dreary apartment, attended by these upright magistrates, who turned a deaf ear to every solicitation even for a hearing from their countrymen; and whose fear of increasing the anger of their superiors in wickedness, as well as in power, had alone induced them to liberate the benevolent Bloomfield, and the unfortunate youth he had so kindly taken under his protection.

CHAP. II.

UPON their arrival at the British Hotel, Mrs. R——, the landlady, gave her countrymen a hearty welcome, not forgetting to enumerate the pains she and Robert (her partner in business) had taken to procure Captain Bloomfield's release, vowing vengeance upon the rascally democrats who had taken him into custody.—“But this lad,” she continued, “did not accompany you from Paris, Captain?”

“No, my good lady, we met accidentally in prison; my knowledge of his family induced me to exert my eloquence to procure his release; and your wise magistrates have

have promised him a passport, to enable him to leave this now miserable country when I do. You perceive he will have reason to remember the French Revolution! Can a surgeon be procured this evening?"

"Did you ever know a Frenchman averse to getting money, Captain? You shall have a Municipal Officer to dress the boy's head in five minutes;—poor fellow! it was a lucky thing for him you were seized;—though mark me, my lad, if I had only known you had been in confinement, I would have got you cleared, or my name is not R——. I am no flincher, nor do I fear telling those paltry fellows my mind; so I will send for one of them to look at your head without loss of time, and then you shall have as good a supper as you ever sat down to, Captain, and an excellent bed to make up for your uncomfortable lodgings last night," leaving the room to give her orders.

The moment Edward was left alone with his kind friend, he fell at his feet, exclaim-

ing, "What would have become of me, Sir, but for your goodness? I must have died in that prison, for I have not a farthing of money left!"

"Never mind, my brave boy," replied the Captain, raising him; "you shall accompany me to England, where I will furnish you with what money you want, to go to any part of the kingdom."

"Oh Sir! but I have no where——" He could not proceed; tears choked his utterance.

"Then you shall accompany me to London," hastily cried the Captain, again taking his hand. "Are you willing to put yourself entirely under my protection?"

"Am I willing! Oh my kind benefactor, I would go with you to the world's end; if I could but convince you how sensibly I feel your goodness, I should be comparatively happy; but indeed my heart is ready to burst."—Another shower of tears followed the sentence.

"Z——ds!"

"Z——ds!" cried the Captain, turning on one side for a few seconds, to conceal his emotion; then catching hold of the alarmed youth, "you young rogue, you quite unman me; depend upon my future protection, my grateful boy, for while I live, you shall never want a friend."

Unable to speak, Edward could only again fall at the Captain's feet, and clasp his knees, while his uplifted eyes called down blessings on the head of his kind protector, who hastily raising him, bade him compose himself, as Mrs. R—— was coming. He was not mistaken; she soon made her appearance, with a short elderly man, whom she declared to be the best surgeon in Boulogne, and at that time in the Municipality. She then turned to him, saying, "I don't wonder you are so supine in punishing those daring rascals; the blows they distribute among friends or foes, all bring grist to your mill."

“An’t you afraid of speaking your sentiments so freely, Mrs. R——?” asked the Captain.

“Not I truly; they must take me as they find me.—Well, doctor, have the democrats wrote liberty upon the lad’s brains?”

“Not so bad neither, Mrs. R——; the blow appears to have been given with a bludgeon, and I must own, with seeming heart and good-will; but that gentleman’s application has been of infinite service, and I trust, by to-morrow, the youth will be much more free from pain, when I should advise his hair to be combed out, and his head to be washed thoroughly with brandy, which may be of infinite service in case of other bruises, for I think I perceive there are some; but a good night’s rest is the best medicine I can at present order him.”

“A good supper first,” cried Mrs. R——, “will enable him to enjoy your prescription. Come drink a good large tumbler or two of wine; it will make you sleep

sleep the better; and remember, Mr. Surgeon, to be here in twelve hours at farthest, to remove your dressings; you will be a better judge of the state of the wound by daylight."

The surgeon laughed, observing, "she was also fond of encouraging trade;" he therefore obliged her by drinking nearly a bottle of wine, and promised to be punctual to her orders in the morning.

An excellent supper was very soon brought in; and as her guests must be very hungry, Mrs. R—— took upon herself to carve, amusing the Captain, during their meal, with her predictions concerning the Revolution; and would have harangued for half the night upon the same subject, if the Captain had not suggested that his young friend stood in need of repose.

Mrs. R—— agreed they must both be in want of rest; but it was not right to lay down too soon after eating such a hearty supper, and a few glasses of wine were very proper. She ordered a fresh bottle, filled

herself a bumper, and drank to the brave Tars of old England. When it was out, she would shew them to their bed-room, for she gloried in having her countrymen in her house.

The Captain was amused with the familiarity of the old woman. The bottle between them was soon finished, when, according to promise, she rose, and led the way, saying, as she ascended the stairs, "Take my word for it, you have not met with such beds in France as I shall put you into;" opening the door of a very good two-bedded room, where the Captain said every thing likely to flatter her vanity. They soon fell into a profound slumber, from which Edward did not wake till near nine. Perceiving his benefactor was still asleep, he rose very softly; but had not finished dressing, when his friend put by his curtain, and asked him how he did.

"I am hardly sensible any thing ails me, my kind protector; if I could but forget

in whose defence I received my wound, I should be the happiest of all human beings !”

“ You possess a very grateful heart, I am convinced, Edward,” he replied ; “ but I must consult our loquacious landlady about procuring you a change of linen ; though perhaps you can wear one of my shirts till we reach England. You shall have my great coat while your own clothes are being brushed.”

Edward, all acquiescence, assisted his patron to dress, and never was any valet more assiduous to please. A hair-dresser was sent for, who soon disentangled one of the finest heads of hair the Captain thought he had ever seen. A proper quantity of brandy was used, according to the surgeon's orders, and Edward was then accommodated with one of his friend's shirts, who sent to purchase a hat and a pair of stockings ; and having had his clothes well brushed, he was astonished to find him not only altered for the better, for that he was prepared to expect,

expect, but to discover he was one of the handsomest youths of his age he ever remembered to have seen.

Mrs. R—— was of the same opinion, and repeated her vows of vengeance against the savage wretches who had disfigured such a countenance. The surgeon promised him a speedy cure, merely recommending the use of lint and brandy, and was handsomely paid for both his trouble and advice. Mrs. R—— advised him, when he departed, to be more attentive in seeing proper respect was always paid to her generous countrymen, who ought not to be insulted by such lawless mobs, nor imprisoned like their own people; though it was certainly the best of those that were now suffering."

The Captain being particularly anxious to leave France, walked down to the port with Edward, resolving to freight a vessel, rather than remain another night at Boulogne, or go on to Calais. A very civil man, the master of one of the packets then in the harbour, requested he would allow him to
take

take him over, declaring he was almost as anxious to leave France as he could be; the wind was not very fair, but by engaging several boats to tow them out of the harbour, he had little doubt of their making Dover in very tolerable time.

“Then by all means let us sail as soon as the tide will permit,” replied Bloomfield; “a few guineas more or less are no object upon such an occasion; therefore order my carriage to be put on board, and the baggage properly cleared out, brother sailor, that I may have no more debates with these free ragamuffins, who fancy liberty consists in knocking down or imprisoning any man they chance to dislike, or to suppose their superior.”

“Leave every thing to me, Sir,” he replied, “and before three we will set sail for the real land of freedom.”

A proper passport for Edward had been sent to the hotel during their absence, and after taking refreshment, which might have been denominated a dinner, they stepped on board the packet, where Edward endeavoured

to display the little skill he had acquired in navigation ; and gave such proofs, of his superior genius, that Captain Bloomfield resolved to bring him forward in that line, if the youth continued to deserve his friendship and protection as much as he now seemed to do.

CHAP. III.

HAVING slept one night at Dover, they set out for London on the following morning. Edward appeared very thoughtful during their journey. The Captain had no difficulty in guessing what preyed upon his mind, and resolved to relieve his anxiety, saying, soon after they had left Dartford, " We are now drawing near the first and the

the finest city in the known world. Were you ever in London, Edward?"

"No, Sir;" a sigh followed the words.

"I am going to my brother's," rejoined the Captain, "who is in the mercantile line. Do you think you should like to be taken into his counting-house for a few years? I am going upon a voyage of discoveries in the course of a month or six weeks, and do not expect to return to England in less than three years, and it may be four. Do you think——"

"Oh pray, Sir," interrupted Edward, catching hold of his benefactor's hand, which he pressed between his own, "take me with you, Oh pray do! I will do any thing and every thing you order me; let me be your cabin-boy if I cannot be a sailor-boy;—don't, my dear and only friend, leave me behind; I shan't mind what I do, if I can but——"

"Your wish is granted, my dear Edward," interrupted the worthy Bloomfield, rather agitated, yet very much pleased with
the

the real anxiety the youth displayed ;—you shall accompany me ; I can make you a sailor if I can't do any thing else for you."

" Thank you, Oh thank you, my dear Sir !" forcibly raising the hand he held to his lips, and bedewing it with his tears :—
" only tell me where your ship is, Sir ;—I can walk you know very well now, and I shan't mind how far it is ; and you may depend upon my staying on board till you come, for I am fearful I shall be troublesome to you in London."

" We will think of that, and what ought to be done," replied the Captain ; " at present you shall accompany me into Crutched Friars ;" whither they accordingly drove.

Mr. Bloomfield, senior, and his family, were in the country, at a villa they had a few miles out of London. The Captain was nevertheless quite at home, and gave orders to have a bed prepared for his young companion. The following morning he went out as soon as he had breakfasted, telling Edward it was uncertain what time

he

he should return ; he had better therefore take a short walk, and look about him, only to mind he did not lose himself, or at all events, to remember the name of Crutched Friars ; and if any questions were asked him by the old housekeeper during his absence, to say he came from Portsmouth, and was going home again in a few days.

Edward concluded his benefactor's ship lay at that port, and anticipated, with both exultation and delight, the moment of his arrival on board a man of war, and the delightful voyage he was upon the eve of making ;—nor was he mistaken in his first conjectures, for on the third morning, during breakfast, the Captain told him he had succeeded in procuring him a birth on board his ship : he therefore meant to send him down to Portsmouth immediately ; he should give him a letter to the commanding Officer on board, who would instruct him in his duty, and take him under his protection till he came down. In answer to the many questions which he would undoubtedly

undoubtedly be asked, he might refer every body to him, if he was averse to saying from what part of England he came; though to prevent their supposing he wished to make any mystery about the matter, he had better mention some village in Yorkshire. "They may perhaps do me the honour," he proceeded, "to suppose you my natural son; that, I dare say, you won't mind much more than I shall."

Edward looked very much confused.

"Oh Sir, what must you think of a boy——"

"I will not think any thing about the matter," interrupted the Captain; "only mind to be punctual in doing your duty, and if you should, as we become more acquainted, think proper to reveal what you at present wish should remain secret, you may, if you continue equally deserving, command my secrecy and my advice."

"You are much too good, my dear Sir; I wish I could break through a promise I
made

made to myself some time since ; but surely it would be very wrong."

" It would, my good lad ; ever let your word be your bond ; never break even a promise made to yourself, except some very important reason renders it necessary and excusable. But come, we must step out, and try if we cannot make you look more like a sailor."

" Ah, Sir ! but consider how much money it will cost ; you must promise to take all I can earn, though even that will not, for many years, amount to enough to repay you."

" Who knows how successful you may be ?" replied the Captain, smiling at his earnestness ; " should there come a war, you may gain plenty of prize-money."

They then proceeded to a shop-shop, where he soon provided him with many necessaries for so long a voyage, and where, to Edward's no small surprise, and very great joy, he found he was entitled to wear the naval uniform, being nominated a
Midshipman

Midshipman on board the Ocean, Captain Bloomfield's ship. What they could not meet with ready made, that generous man told his *protégé* should be sent after him in a few days, and gave orders accordingly.

The same evening, therefore, Edward set out in the mail for Portsmouth, and the following morning went on board the Ocean, where he met with a very hearty welcome from his messmates, and the crew in general.

The officer to whom he had been particularly recommended by Captain Bloomfield, was very kind to him; therefore, in a few days, he found himself perfectly at home, and grew daily more delighted with his future prospects.

Within the month Captain Bloomfield came on board, and every thing being nearly ready, he proposed sailing in eight or ten days at farthest. Edward was rejoiced to see his benefactor, who soon called him into his cabin, and asked him if he was perfectly reconciled to the idea of leaving England for

for so long a time, particularly as their voyage would very probably prove rather perilous: adding, "It is not yet too late—I can easily put another into your place; I wish you therefore to reflect whether you have no friend or relation whom you would wish to consult before we sail."

He was proceeding, till he perceived Edward's colour forsake his cheeks; and his animated countenance, which had expressed so much joy not many moments before, when he had come on board, now as forcibly expressed his grief. The tears stood in his eyes; he was trying to speak, when Bloomfield caught his hand, saying—

"I want no farther answer, my dear Edward; I thought a month might have made some alteration in your sentiments; you shall sail with me, and I don't foresee we shall part in haste."

"A thousand thanks, my dear Sir, my more than father! You have saved my life, fed, clothed, and made me a sailor; who, besides yourself, would have been so good
to

to me? I have been thinking of it all a great many times, indeed I have; and I trust, while I live, you will never have reason to repent, or reproach me with ingratitude. Should I ever forget the favours I have received at your hands, turn me out of doors, to seek my bread as my——”

He hesitated, and looked confused. The Captain considered him with more attention than he was aware of, and was going to speak, when Edward, falling on his knees before him, sighed deeply, and then entreated his forgiveness: he could not be more explicit without forfeiting his word, and then ran out of the cabin, to give way to the overflowing of his grateful heart.

The Captain sat ruminating for some time upon the mystery which seemed to hang over the youth, and hardly knew whether he ought to suffer him to leave England till he was better acquainted with his private history;—yet to force him to an explanation, was very contrary to his own, and the principles he had endeavoured to

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instil into Edward's mind; it would therefore be doing violence to both their feelings, and answer no very great purpose; he determined to suffer the lad to follow the bent of his inclinations, as should he be, as he strongly suspected, the son of any man of consequence, the father, supposing him living, could not blame him for having probably saved his child's life, and endeavoured to preserve him from starving. The profession he had adopted, was particularly honourable; and should he, as he trusted he would, distinguish himself in it, his parents could not be ashamed of the choice he had made. That a wish to conceal the lowness of his origin, kept him silent, the Captain could not believe;—no boy of mean extraction would have been sent to Douai; and Edward appeared to have received an excellent education previous to his going thither, and had certainly been destined for the Navy, by his having been so particularly instructed in navigation, and other sciences, likely to prove of service

to him in that profession, which was a farther proof his relations were of some consequence, or at all events in very good circumstances. Something had occurred to alienate their, or his affections: a mother, or father-in-law, perhaps, had driven him from home. He certainly had hinted some one had turned him out to seek his fortune at that tender age; in which case he highly commended the spirit he had displayed, and hoped he would, as he grew up, realize a sufficient fortune to render him independent of those he had reason to complain of.

Prepossessed with these notions, he met Edward again with a smile, and ever after addressed, and mentioned him as the child of his adoption; and at the expiration of nine days, with a fine breeze, and favourable weather, they set sail for the South Seas, where they were to prosecute those discoveries first made by the able navigators who had preceded Captain Bloomfield in this arduous undertaking.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

DURING the following three years and eight months, they visited every island that had already been discovered, explored several parts of the north-west coast of America, laid in a large stock of furs, and, like many more who had preceded them, not being able to discover any nearer road or track back to Europe than the one they had come, returned the same way.

Captain Bloomfield had never occasion to repent having taken Edward under his protection, who had been third Lieutenant for the last ten months. As either owing to his having a better constitution, or being

more amenable to controul than many of his companions, he had never had an hour's illness from the time he came on board; while many of them had fallen a sacrifice more to their own imprudence, than to any bad effects arising from the various climates they visited. But Edward always paid particular attention to Captain Bloomfield's advice, and had, under his auspices, studied botany with infinite perseverance, as he thought it a pursuit rather adapted, and congenial to his profession;—and as he was blessed with a very ready comprehension, and an excellent memory, he, perhaps, profited more by the Captain's instruction and example than any one on board. He was also improved very much in point of figure, if not in complexion. Though he had had few opportunities of studying the more elegant accomplishments, he was now master of every useful acquirement, and was naturally so graceful, even the *Dieu de la dance* could hardly have improved his manners. Had he been his protector's

protector's only son, he could not have been more sincerely attached to him; for if he laboured under the slightest indisposition, Edward became his nurse, and never quitted him except when his duty required it, studying in every respect, and by every means, to make his benefactor all the amends in his power for the serious services he had rendered him: indeed he was now at an age to be sensible of the full value of such a friend.

They met but few English ships during their cruize, but learned at the Cape, that England had been some time at war with France. The news rather rejoiced Edward, who observed, that they should not in that case be idle when they returned, if his dear friend obtained a ship, and that he would not permit himself to doubt.

They had arrived within twenty leagues of the Land's End, when a French vessel bore down upon them, which proved to be a privateer of twenty guns:—the Ocean carried only sixteen, and having been out so long,

long, was not in good repair, and failed very heavy. The Captain therefore remarked she could not run away, nor were they in a good fighting condition, for they were very short of hands: however, they must try what they could do, as it would be hard to be made prisoners, after so long an absence from their native land; and as there was no alternative, the enemy gaining upon them very fast, the Captain ordered the decks to be cleared for an engagement, and encouraged his men to do their duty. Beloved as he had ever been by his crew, there needed but little exhortation to do their best for the honour of old England; and after upwards of two hours' hard fighting, having carried away their enemy's mizen-mast, and otherwise damaged her hull and rigging, she was under the necessity of striking her colours.

The first Lieutenant of the Ocean was wounded in the action, and Edward had received two splinter wounds of no great

great consequence ; his benefactor therefore appointed him to take possession of the prize, with as many hands as could be spared, which was not more than half the number he would have sent on board her, had the Ocean been properly manned.

Edward's transports were unbounded upon being thus promoted, and he anticipated his arrival at Portsmouth with heart-felt delight. But dame Fortune was not in one of her most favourable moods, as a brisk gale sprung up almost immediately after he got on board the French vessel, which separated the two ships, and at day-break the prize, being absolutely ungovernable in her shattered state, was soon retaken by a French frigate which chanced to come near them, and sent into the port of Dieppe, where Edward and his men were immediately conveyed to prison.

The following day Captain Bloomfield reached Portsmouth, where he was in hopes of finding his prize: he therefore experienced a very severe disappointment ; and

as day after day passed on without her coming in, he began seriously to dread (knowing the crazy condition she was in), that she had gone to the bottom.

Edward, and four of his sailors, were put into the same small room upon the ground-floor, apartments being scarce, they were informed. Their only prospect was a dead wall, and two sentinels continually parading before their one dismal window. While his companions were lamenting their hard fate, Edward's mind was solely occupied in forming plans to effect his escape, though he entertained but little hopes of succeeding, as the window was secured by bars of iron, both within and without; yet he saw no other means of effecting their liberation, as their door was not only firmly secured, but guarded by a sentinel on the outside. During the day they were permitted to open an upper pane in their window, to admit the fresh air. On the second of their imprisonment, while the sentinels were confined to their boxes by a very heavy shower of rain,

Edward

Edward requested one of his companions would allow him to mount upon his shoulders, that he might reconnoitre, and be able to judge whether there was a possibility of bringing his scheme to bear. He was thus enabled to reach the outer bars, one of which, owing to the decayed state of the window-frame, he was able to shake, and soon found, by the assistance of a knife he had in his pocket, which had a turn-screw at one end, he could, if time was allowed him, remove what he had hitherto considered as the greatest impediment to his design. He therefore called a council as soon as he had descended from his elevated station, and it was agreed they must remove an inner, as well as an outer bar, before they could hope to succeed. Edward considered this as very practicable—all they had to guard against, was being discovered at work; therefore, thinking the present a favourable moment, he entered upon business. The bars were fixed in with lead, and as the stones were not very hard, he

made greater progress than he had dared to hope ; his knife proved so staunch, that in eight-and-forty hours he found he could force the bar he had been loosening.

At the moment the French vessel was bearing down upon them, Edward, foreseeing they must be captured, had requested his companions not to say that he could speak French, because, supposing him ignorant of the language, whoever was appointed to guard them, would speak their sentiments with much more freedom, and might thus unintentionally afford them an opportunity of escaping from captivity.

Having thus far succeeded to his wishes, a difficulty arose which had not been foreseen ; two of the sailors were found, upon measuring, to be too corpulent to force themselves through the opening Edward had contrived to make, and the knife was so worn, it appeared rather impracticable to attempt loosening a second bar. They therefore lost all hopes, and anxiously endeavoured to prevent Edward from profiting
by

by his industry, alledging that should he succeed in getting away, those who remained behind would most probably be removed into a much worse dungeon: besides, it would be impossible for him to pass the watch, if he did get out of prison, allowing some of them to sleep upon duty;—three out of the four, therefore, absolutely set their faces against making the attempt. After having proceeded so far, and with such success, Edward was very much vexed; but one, a gallant fellow, swore that he would be guided by his brave commander, and follow him to the gates of hell, if he was inclined to venture there, representing to the other three, that far from being treated more harshly, as they feared, they would, on the contrary, meet with more indulgence, when it was found they had preferred a life of idleness in a French prison, to running some certain risk to obtain employment at home.

“They might do as they chose,” was the reply; “only to remember they had

given them fair warning of all the difficulties they would have to encounter."—Edward had no money to bribe the sentinels, or he knew he needed not have taken half the trouble to have ensured a speedy and certain escape; for they had been stripped of all their valuables the moment they landed: he found, therefore, he must trust solely to his own courage and invention.

On the fifth morning, under pretence of being stifled for want of air, he broke one of the lower panes in their window, and received a very severe reprimand, when the guard was changed, for what he had done. He excused himself by signs, signifying why he had taken such a liberty; and as it did not appear a matter of much consequence to the officer upon duty, he gave no immediate orders to have it replaced, which enabled the prisoners to converse by signs, and now and then a French word, with the various sentinels without, and afforded Edward an opportunity of learning their real sentiments respecting the prisoners, without
being

being at all suspected.—He, as well as the others, took snuff with several succeeding ones, in token of friendship; for what Frenchman of any denomination is without his snuff-box? But Edward had a meaning in what he both did and advised, as he was by no means fond of snuff: though he had for some time carried a box, which was filled with a powder greatly resembling rasped tobacco, but it was, in fact, procured from a herb, which he had been taught the use of by the natives in one of the South Sea Islands. As a very small quantity taken as snuff, had every effect of an opiate, he had more than once experienced its efficacy on board the Ocean; but had never disclosed the secret, for fear, if it got into the hands of some of the crew, it might have been made an improper use of; and he happened to be well supplied with this nostrum at the time he was taken. The small value of the box which contained this treasure, was its only security.

During

During the course of this day, he contrived to mix several of the pinches he had received from the sentinels, with his own powder, the better to disguise its flavour, though it was far from unpleasant. Late in the evening, just before the guards were changed, he was very free with his box; and as soon as the others came on, he was still more bountiful. It was now quite dark, and all was soon profoundly silent; he therefore easily distinguished the watchword for the night, which he foresaw might be of infinite service to him, if they were fortunate enough to pass the first guard. Every thing had been prepared, as far as circumstances would admit; and having made a last and unsuccessful effort to induce those who had determined to remain behind, to accompany them in their flight, Edward, having mounted the shoulders of the brave fellow, who was, like himself, determined to face any danger rather than remain longer in prison, forced himself through the bars, and reached the ground, without

without disturbing the sentinels, who were snoring pretty loudly in their respective boxes.

The sailor, who got out by the same means, followed him very quietly; and they began to grope their way, taking what they thought to be the nearest road to the entrance of the Castle, or citadel, in which they were confined, hoping to contrive some method to scale the walls, if they could not otherwise reach the street. But they had not gone far before Edward perceived, by a glimmering light through a window they were passing, the guard-house, where he saw six or seven soldiers stretched out upon straw, and covered with blankets; their coats and hats were hanging upon pegs round the apartment. He paused for several seconds. All remaining quiet, he ventured to try the door, which readily gave way to his hand; he entered very cautiously, notwithstanding his companion pulled him by the coat to prevent him, but soon discovered what had induced him to run this,

as

as he at first thought, unnecessary risk. Having secured what he wanted, Edward extinguished the light, and then stole softly back again, with a coat and hat for each, and desired the sailor to adorn himself in the one, while he put on the other; their own clothes they left at some distance.

This disguise inspired Edward with much greater confidence, though they proceeded with the same caution, and in total silence, till they reached a sentinel, who called out for the watch-word, which the young Lieutenant instantly repeating, they were suffered to proceed, and soon arrived at the great gates, which were closed for the night; and they were told, when Edward had again given the watch-word, and said they were going out upon secret business for the Commanding Officer, that they must return to him for the keys.

Though in some respects prepared, they were terribly perplexed at their disappointment; but instantly retreated to reconnoitre the

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the prison walls, which were exceedingly high, and were at last half inclined to return for their clothes, and then to their prison, as they foresaw no means of escaping before their having left it would be discovered; when they were roused by a violent knocking at the gate which they no longer hoped to pass before they were exchanged. They therefore, in the first moment of alarm, tried to conceal themselves in a dark corner, and soon heard a general bustle in the yard, and in a short time saw the two soldiers whom they had deprived of their coats, hurrying past them.

They had before considered their escape as impracticable, and were now convinced they should find it not less difficult to make their retreat; they therefore made up their minds to expect a much more rigorous confinement would effectually preclude their making any farther attempts to elude the vigilance of their guards, when they observed an officer, who was hastening to the gates with a bunch of keys in his hand, and
heard

heard the sentinel call out, in answer to his questions, "More prisoners."

By the lights which soon appeared, they saw the gates opened, and a guard enter with two well-dressed men, whom they gave into the custody of the officer upon duty. During this ceremony, Edward caught hold of his companion, whispered him to conceal his face as much as possible without exciting suspicion, and to follow him close. He did as he was desired; they soon mixed with the crowd, when, owing to their disguise, and the lights being withdrawn, they slipped through the gates, and, to their infinite joy, found themselves in the street.

CHAP.

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CHAP. V.

IT may be supposed they took but little time to consider what they ought to do, as they had now no other chance of escaping, but in reaching the port undetected. Edward had some recollection of the way he had so lately travelled very much against his will, and was fortunate enough not to mistake the road; but when they arrived upon the quay, they found the tide was out, therefore knew it would be some hours before any thing could be afloat in the harbour. They groped about from boat to boat for some time before they met with one, in which it was at all likely they

they could reach England ; but in less than an hour they heard a bustle at a distance, which convinced them they had been missed, and that a general search was taking place ; they were therefore only anxious to conceal themselves, which they did in an open fishing-boat, among the large stones laid in the bottom for ballast, covering themselves over with the sails, &c. and thus eluded the vigilance of their pursuers, though every vessel and boat in the harbour was visited, even to the one in which they were hid ;—but, as probably no great reward was offered to stimulate the exertions of the soldiers, their search was more a matter of form, than of utility : so that Edward and his companion were fortunate enough to get out to sea, and even some way from the shore, before they were discovered.

It had been very calm all night, but with the sun rose a smart breeze, which obliged several smaller boats, that had ventured out in pursuit of them, to return into port, and

and they soon lost sight of the French coast; but owing to their having no compass, and the weather being very hazy, as well as tempestuous, they did not reach Dover till the third evening.—A person must have undergone the same hardships and difficulties they had suffered, to have felt the pleasure they did when they set foot upon British ground; for they did not meet with any vessel while at sea, which they could get near enough to hail, to procure any relief; and they had merely, when they left France, a few scraps of bread and meat in their pockets, which they had saved the two preceding days out of their scanty allowance; they were therefore all but famished when they arrived.

“Heaven be praised!” cried Edward, as he gaily stepped on shore; “we are now in the real land of liberty, though without a farthing in our pockets.”

They were very soon surrounded, as every one was eager to learn their story, having
long

long been in sight, and supposed, from their boat and dress, to be Frenchmen.

"No, no," cried the exulting Edward, "we have only taken French leave of the Monfieurs; we are trueborn English sailors."

He was scarcely permitted to conclude his speech, before they were told, not in the politest terms, their services were wanted by a pressgang, who immediately seized them, and conveyed them to prison for the night.

For some time Edward thought it was a joke; but when he found they were really in custody, by way of inducing the tender-hearted set, who had laid violent hands upon them, to release them, he thought it necessary to tell them who he really was, and that he bore his Majesty's commission; but having no proofs to produce in support of his assertion, he was informed that "such after-thoughts never went down; they still had their doubts whether he was not a Frenchman, and perhaps a spy."

Edward

Edward laughed at their absurdity; and as they allowed them a tolerable meal, they agreed to bear their fresh misfortune with patience, understanding they were to be taken before the regulating Captain in the morning.

Owing to their recent fatigue, they slept very soundly, till they were disturbed by the noise around them; and between nine and ten they were conducted by the gang, who had taken them into custody, before the gentleman who acted upon such occasions, and who was perfectly calculated to have the command of such a band of ruffians, and to sit in judgment upon the outrages they daily committed upon their fellow-creatures. His manner of address was not what Edward, who was first interrogated, had been accustomed to: however, in a few words as possible, he related how he had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and how he had finally made his escape. The penetrating genius of the person whom he addressed, rendered him very clear-sighted;

fought; he therefore observed, officers were never confined with common men;—however, he by no means blamed him for having attempted, and succeeded in obtaining his liberty;—therefore, though he saw through his shallow scheme, in consideration of his youth, and the hardships he must have undergone, he should allow him to depart unmolested; but his companion was immediately ordered on board the tender, as a very proper person to serve his Majesty: his looks were a sufficient proof of his being a British sailor.

Edward could not conceal a tear, too proud to ask any favour for himself, yet he begged very hard for his companion, and in return for his humanity, was called a crying wretch, with many more equally opprobrious epithets, and was even threatened to be also sent on board the tender.

“If I did not entertain the most sanguine hopes of obtaining my brave companion's liberty, and of putting some check to his very clear-headed reasoning, I should be obliged to fight.”

to that power you at present hold, Sir, I would share his fate."

This speech, and Edward's undaunted looks, rather staggered the great man, who said, in a peevish tone, "What, insult me for doing my duty, Sir?"

"I don't think you know what is your duty, Sir; I am sure you are not commissioned to treat the brave defenders of your country with such unnecessary harshness."

The officer made no reply, only again ordered the sailor into custody. Edward therefore left the room with his friend, whom he swore to liberate if possible, declaring his intention of hurrying up to London, to state his case to their brave Captain, who he was certain would interest himself in his favour.

Some of the spectators pitied the young man; for allowing what Edward had told the Regulating Officer was all a fiction, it was but natural he should say or do any thing to obtain his liberty. They all

agreed he had rather a French look ; he was certainly very brown, and it was soon buzzed about, loud enough for Edward to hear, that his Worship thought them spies, and had given this one his liberty on purpose to discover where he was going, and what he meant to do, that he might act accordingly.

Edward guessed that the consequential gentleman whom he had offended, certain of meeting with protection, was ready to say or do any thing likely to palliate his late injustice ; and was reflecting how he ought to act, when a collection was set on foot for his relief, and he had very soon four shillings and seven-pence put into his hands to help him along. With this sum, (truly grateful to those who had thus benevolently furnished him with the means to prosecute his intended journey), he set out for London, and formed the resolution of not stopping till he arrived there ; but his strength, after the fatigue and hardships he had so lately undergone, was not equal
to

to his impatience. He reached Canterbury between two and three o'clock ; stopped at a small public-house, where he refreshed himself with bread and cheese, and a pint of ale, and then set forward again with equal speed ; entered Sittingbourn as the clock was striking seven, where he again drank a pint of beer, and thought he could manage the next ten miles to Rochester in good time, where he intended to take a few hours' repose. He had reached the turnpike-house, which is about half a mile from the town, where, by the light of a large lamp, he perceived two men in earnest discourse. He had been told there was an upper and a lower road branched off at this gate, and was advised to take the former ; he therefore naturally enquired of these men whether he was right. They happened to be going the upper road, and offered to bear him company. Edward of course made no objection, informing them he was quite a stranger, and secretly hoping these men would be able to procure him admit-

tance into some decent public-house, it being near ten o'clock, and he found himself much fatigued.

They continued in conversation till they reached a very lonely part of the road, when one of them, uttering a tremendous oath, exclaimed, "You are a Frenchman!"

"I acknowledge I am but very lately returned from France," was the reply, "but I assure you I was both born and bred in England."

"His dress gave the lie to his words," he was informed, "and whether he was French or English, it was not proper such a suspicious person as he seemed to be, should be upon the road at that time of night; the days were long enough for every body but rogues."

"If you will but procure me a comfortable night's lodging," said Edward, "I will treat you both at supper, and tell you who I really am."

He was still speaking, when he was knocked down by the one behind him, who
called

called to his companion, "Go it, my lad, down with the French dog!" and effectually they did down with him, while they rifled his pockets, and then left him either to die where he was, or to proceed on his journey as well as he was able. He soon recovered his senses, and after a few efforts, was able to rise and crawl into the town, where he entered the first public-house he came to, and besought the landlord to let him have a bed immediately; to which request the drunken being replied, "he was just going to bed himself, and he had no room in his house bad enough to receive such a dirty beast as he appeared to be;" catching him by the arm, and easily swinging him round, he exclaimed, "What trick is all this? Why have you besmeared your back and shoulders with blood? What end was that frolic to answer?"

Edward pulled off his large hat, and told him, if he looked, he might easily perceive from whence it issued.

Without doing as he desired, the fellow caught hold of the hat, swearing, "By G—d, I believe you are a Frenchman! Out of my house this moment, you French rascal, or I will soon shew you the nearest way to the door! Why, your coat is also French; aye, aye, you have only met with your due. What, I suppose you have been impudent to some of my countrymen, and they have treated you as I should have done in their places; come, tramp directly!"

"Surely," cried Edward, "in a Christian country, allowing I am a Frenchman, I shall meet a more humane being than thou art;" and he was turning out of the house, when the landlord again caught him by the arm.

"What was that you said about a Christian country? I am sure you have not lived in one of late; I hardly know whether I ought not to have you taken up; I think you have very lately made your escape from some prison. Can you swear you are not a Frenchman?"

"Safely,"

"Safely," was the reply, "and I could also swear you are a disgrace to the country you have so just a right to extol. I wish you a good night."

"Not so fast, my impudent young blade; I have not decided whether I shall or shall not let you go."

"Detain me at your peril! Only take care I do not one day make you repent your insolence, as well as your inhumanity, to a fellow-creature in distress; I may perhaps teach you that such houses as your's are licensed for the accommodation of travellers. I will endeavour to find out a Magistrate before I leave the town of Rochester, who may enforce that useful lesson."

This spirited threat humbled the insolent landlord, who was in too low circumstances, and of too little consequence to be upon a familiar footing with the acting Justice of the Peace. He therefore told Edward he had "only been in joke; it was his way when merry; hoped he had not offended, and swore

if he had a bed, he should be accommodated; but he would draw him a pint of ale, and then try if he could persuade his boy to make shift for one night upon the settle in the tap-room. Go, you Sir, and fetch this gentleman a pint of the best old October, that we may drink together, and make it up; I never bear malice, but love dearly to be merry."

"Stop, my lad," cried Edward, "I have no money to pay for any refreshment, having been robbed of every farthing I had in my pocket."

"What," said the landlord, bursting into laughter, "no money, and want a bed?—Been robbed, ha!—and yet talk of taking me before a Justice! A likely story truly; I thought I should catch you out at last, so now take my advice—leave my house quietly, and go with your fine Canterbury tale to the overseer of the poor; he is the proper person to relieve strolling vagrants; he will pass you from this parish to the next;—a bed indeed at a decent house like mine!

mine! please to seek a twopenny lodging, and leave your large hat in pawn, till you get wherewithal of the parish officers in the morning to defray your expences."

A young girl chanced to come in while he was thus displaying his *humanity*, to fetch a quart of ale; and having heard the landlord's last speech, she told Edward, as she followed him out of the house, that Mr. Haunch, the overseer, was at a public-house a little further on, and if he wanted him, she would shew him the door.

Edward thankfully accepted her offer, and followed her to a rather better looking house than the one he had just quitted, where he very humbly enquired for Mr. Haunch, and was, in a few seconds, conducted into a small parlour, where three gentlemen sat smoking their pipes over a bowl of strong punch; a little boy appeared to be waiting for one of them.

From an overseer of the poor Edward had no doubt of receiving every relief his situation required, as he presumed none but

good and humane men were put into such offices; but he soon found his mistake. Mr. Haunch was a butcher by trade, and had certainly been intended by Nature for that calling, as no man was ever possessed of a less share of the milk of human kindness; he was very fat and bloated, and now appeared to swell with all the importance of a narrow mind in office.

“ Well, what is your business with me at this time of the night?” was his first polite demand.

Edward told him he had left Dover on foot that morning, with a sufficient sum of money in his pocket to have paid his expences all the way to London; but that he had unfortunately been knocked down and robbed, coming into Rochester, by two ill-looking fellows with sailor's jackets on (for sailors would not be guilty of such an action), and with whom he had walked from the turnpike-gate, thinking they were what they appeared. He therefore merely requested the loan of a few shillings, to enable him

to

to procure a lodging for the night, and to pursue his journey in the morning; adding, that the lateness of the hour, and excess of fatigue, in addition to the blow he had received, obliged him, much against his will, to be thus troublesome.

“Come from Dover this morning, and robbed at the turnpike?”

“No, Sir, I——”

“It is all the same,” interrupted the overseer, “I believe you said near the town’s end;—now the matter is, you have got drunk, and spent all your money, so think you can hum me out of more.” He laughed at his own penetration.—“No, no, young fellow, old birds an’t to be caught with chaff; I am up to all these sorts of rigs: I hear better lamentable stories than you have told, every day in the year. Who do you know at Dover? Tell me that; and where you are going to in London. I am pretty well known every where, and know a pretty many in my turn; so take care what lies you tell next, lest I find you out.”

“ I have no acquaintance in Dover, Sir ; I only landed there last night, after making my escape from a French prison.”

“ Shew me your pass ?”

“ I have no such thing,” he replied.

“ Did you escape alone, or swim across the Channel ? Or how did you reach Dover ?”

In hopes of being relieved, Edward entered into a short detail respecting who he was, and what had befallen him, which made it very clear to Mr. Haunch that he was some rascally sailer, who had made his escape from the pressgang, and that he had met with his broken head at Dover instead of near Rochester, which he rightly deserved for refusing to serve his King and country in time of need. Then making several remarks upon his dress and suspicious appearance, he concluded by putting his hand in his pocket, and pulling out two-pence. “ There,” he cried, “ take that, and set off about your business ; don’t come to me in the morning, for I shall do no more
for

for you. I give you that out of my own pocket; I never put such trifles down in the parish books."

Edward's hand half recoiled when he extended it to receive the proffered which the donor perceiving, he was going to return it into his pocket, saying, "None of your scornful looks, fellow! you have not got it yet."

As soon as he had taken it, "I thank you, Sir," he exclaimed, with a heart nearly too full for utterance; "absolute distress forces me to accept your gift, but if I live to reach London, I will repay the obligation with interest;" turning his back upon the company, who saluted him as he retreated, with "Insolent scoundrel! beggarly rascal! &c."—But the little boy, already mentioned, followed him to the door, and slipped a penny into his hand, saying, "I wish I had some more;—good night, poor man!" running back to the room he had quitted.

The

The innocence, feeling, and humanity of this child brought tears into Edward's eyes, who prayed that such excellent principles might not be perverted by the inhumanity of his parent, for he concluded, by his resemblance, that he was the overseer's son; and as much at a loss as ever where to go, he found himself once more in the streets of Rochester.

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CHAP. VI.

THE clock had struck eleven, and most people were retired. What to do Edward could not resolve;—once he thought of returning to the alehouse he had first entered; but was convinced he should, after what had passed, be refused admittance, particularly as he had but three-pence in his pocket;—he therefore proceeded slowly, till he found himself at the foot of the bridge which he had been told he was to cross; when, upon turning his eyes to the left, he perceived a sign, and a large stable-yard. He paused for a moment, and at last saw one of the stable-men passing with a lantern.

lantern. To obtain permission to stretch himself out in a stable or loft, under such circumstances, was now become the height of his ambition; he therefore ventured into the yard, and to the ostler, who was going his last round, preferred his humble request, adding, he had no money to pay for a lodging, having been robbed of all he possessed but two hours before.

This man, the most humane he had yet met with, listened with evident marks of compassion to his short story, and readily granted his request. He next examined the wound at the back of his head, and swore that a horse could not have kicked harder than the robber had done; and this was such a convincing proof of his veracity, he put something to it, which he said would do him a great deal of good, reminding him, at the same time, that it was very costly.

Edward begged him to get him a little beer, that they might drink together, and gave him all the money he had, relating how he came by it. The honest ostler,

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however, swore he would not be also a robber; that would help him forward in the morning, fetching him a jug of very good ale, and some bread and meat, upon which he desired him to make a hearty supper, while he made him a comfortable bed in the hay-loft with some horse rugs; and having arranged every thing as well as he was able for his guest's reception, he soon conducted him to his apartment.

Of late years Edward had not been accustomed to many luxuries; but he had never found even a down bed more comfortable than his present couch. He was too much fatigued, and his head was too painful, to allow him to close his eyes for some time; his ideas, therefore, naturally reverted to his recent misfortunes, and the unkind, not to say inhuman treatment, he had experienced. He thought the people of the south must be very different to those of the north of England, where they were renowned for their hospitality and benevolence; else he had been peculiarly
unfortunate

unfortunate in the few appeals he had made to the humanity of the Kentish men; who had so disgusted him with his native country, that he was more than once tempted to wish himself back again upon one of the uncivilized islands they had touched at in their voyage.

He was awoke in the morning, though not very early, by the people in the stables beneath where he slept, and found himself much refreshed, though very stiff and unwell: he was besides very thirsty, and his head was more painful than ever. He however rose, and went to a pump in the yard, where he washed the blood and dirt off his face and hands, and also took a hearty draught, which he thought would help him on his way. He was soon perceived by the ostler, who kindly enquired how he found himself, and blamed him for drinking water, "which was bad in the shoes, but worse in the guts," he observed, giving him a bumper of gin by way of correcting it; he then wished him well, and after a hearty

shake

shake of the hand, they parted, and Edward set forward on his journey.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when he reached Dartford, and he had not taken any thing since he left Rochester, except a little water at a brook by the road-side, nor had he then any inclination to eat. He had vainly hoped, when they first came in sight, that every carriage which passed him, would have offered to convey him a few miles upon his journey; but as he could not pay for riding, he could not muster sufficient courage to crave the charity of any one again. He had resolved to spend his whole stock of cash in this town, hoping he should be able to reach London before he wanted any thing more. He did so, and after resting himself for about two hours, set out again quite refreshed, as he thought; but had not proceeded half way, before his strength began to fail him, and he was yet eight miles from town, when he was obliged to sit down by the road-side to rest himself. Several carriages passed him as the evening closed

closed in. His pallid looks were certainly calculated to excite compassion, and many appeared to pity him, and called to know what had befallen him; but contented themselves with observing he had been very unfortunate, without endeavouring, in any respect, to alleviate his sufferings.

The sun was setting, when, to his infinite regret, he found he had still seven miles to go; and he was so absolutely exhausted and so faint, he only wished to find some place where he could once more stretch his wearied limbs. Not a house was to be seen likely to afford a night's lodging to such a being as himself. Some very handsome villas were scattered at a distance, but he had neither strength nor courage to seek admittance even into the out-houses of any of them. He therefore merely sought some quiet corner, where he might remain, unperceived, till morning; and seeing a thick well-cut quickset hedge to the left, he rather crawled than walked towards it, and soon discovered a stile which led into

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an adjoining field, apparently laid out in the style of a pleasure-ground, as there was a gentle slope down to the hedge, above which ran posts and chains, to prevent what cattle might be turned into the field from injuring the hedge. Two fine Italian poplars both shaded and concealed the stile, under one of which he thought he should lie quite at his ease, as that and the hedge would completely protect him from the cold. According to this plan, he had just settled himself for the night, when he heard footsteps near him, and, upon listening, distinguished the voices of two females, who seemed hastily approaching. The moment they reached the stile, the one who was first, cried, "Thank Heaven, I don't mind now—we shall soon be at home; I never will stay out so late again, without we have my father or some gentleman with us."

"I wish we had let the servant come a little farther with us," was the reply. "How soon it got dark! But go along—we shall

shall be scolded for our imprudence I dare say."

The first had got over, and was proceeding according to her companion's desire, when, in stepping over the stile, caught sight of Edward, whose unexpected appearance in such a place, and at such a time of the night, might have startled a more courageous person than a girl of sixteen. She gave a violent scream, fell over the stile, and fainted close to the object of her terror, who, ill as he was, started up to give her every assistance in his power, and to assure her she had nothing to fear. Upon hearing her screams, her friend flew back just in time to see Edward as he was rising; which alarmed her so dreadfully, she ran off as fast as she could, screaming, "Murder! murder!" with all her might.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the distressed Edward, "surely there is no end to my misfortunes!" raising the young lady as well as he was able, and saying every thing he thought likely to calm her fears,

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though he hardly knew whether it was safe for him to remain where he was, as he now ran the risk of being accused of murder, for she shewed no signs of life.

In this state of truly anxious suspense continued for several minutes, supporting her against the stile, when a deep sigh led him to hope she was recovering. He repeated his former assurances of her being in no danger, and told her, as she appeared to recover her senses, his short and simple tale, and concluded by hoping she had not received any injury from her fall. He declared he should never forgive himself if she was at all likely to be a material sufferer from his having sought the friendly shelter of so thick a hedge, and not having spoke when he heard her and her companion advancing.

There appeared so much sincerity in both Edward's words and looks, that they made a deep impression upon his auditress, who was now as anxious to relieve, as she had been to shun him. Her terror having
totally

totally subsided, she was soon able to rise, and to express her real commiseration for the unfortunate youth before her, telling him her friend's father's house was not more than a quarter of a mile distant, and where she hoped he would be accommodated with a lodging and every other necessary; however, whether or not, she requested his acceptance of her purse, and wished it was more amply filled, putting it into his hand, while she shed tears of sympathy at the recollection of the unmerited hardships that had fallen to his share.

Unable to express the various feelings that oppressed him, Edward could only bedew the beautiful hand, that thus bountifully relieved him, at a moment when he had almost begun to despair, with tears of cordial gratitude; nor could he let it go without venturing to raise it to his lips. His agitation spoke far more forcibly in his favour than any words could have done.

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They were in this situation, when they heard several people advancing with great speed. The other young lady had run all the way home, where she had created a general alarm, by declaring "her friend had been murdered; that she had seen her dead upon the ground, and her blood upon the villain's clothes;" protesting she had narrowly escaped sharing her fate.

So terrible a story made every one in the house arm themselves with the first weapons they could lay hold of, and fly towards the stile where the murder had been committed, the young lady and her father heading the party; but the moment they caught sight of her whom they expected to find a corpse, conversing very familiarly with a young man, whose appearance certainly might have warranted the supposition of his being a robber, the old gentleman hardly dared believe the evidence of his eyes, but called out, "Who is there?" while his daughter, holding fast by his arm, screamed out, "Mercy upon me, Maria, is it you?"

"Undoubtedly," was the reply. "This unfortunate young man, being too ill to pursue his journey to London, laid down to rest himself under this hedge; and I was silly enough to take him either for a ghost or a robber, I can hardly tell which."

"An unfortunate young man," said the father, as he ventured to approach; "why, Jane, what is all this? Have you been making fools of us all by way of a good joke?"

"Upon my honour, Sir, I thought what I told you was truth; I am sure I saw Maria dead, as I supposed."

"I certainly was childish enough to faint, Sir, and am really sorry I have so unnecessarily alarmed you for my safety. This young man, as you may perceive, has been wounded, and afterwards robbed himself, far from intending either to frighten or rob me."

"The last part of your speech may be true, child," said the old gentleman, "but as for the story you have been listening to, it's

it's all a fudge, take my word for it ; some vagrant, I suppose, who wishes to excite your charity. I wonder how you could, for a moment, be imposed upon by such stale stuff ; I am truly happy you have escaped so well : as for the fellow's lying in the ditch, why it was merely to flatter or frighten you out of a little money when he saw the way you were going ; so pray come along home, and let him go about his business."

" Indeed, Maria, my father is in the right," said Jane, in French ; " I only wonder how you could think of remaining so long with such a shabby wretch. I am sure, if he had not known our house was so near, you might have repented ; it was really, in my opinion, being very foolhardy : feel in your pockets—there is no knowing what such low wretches are capable of doing, and while you were insensible."

" What is all that there ?" cried the father, who was no proficient in French.

"I was only saying something, Sir, I did not wish every body should understand."

"Perhaps you were right in that, girl;—but pray, young chap, where were you robbed?"

"On the other side of Rochester, Sir, rather later than this last night."

"Aye, I thought it was not very lately. Where was you coming from, and where are you going? Though I suppose all roads are alike to you."

"Indeed you wrong me, Sir. —But five days since I broke out of a French prison, and had, I can hardly call it, the good fortune, considering the usage I have met with since my landing, to arrive at Dover the night before last; and had I been able, I meant to have reached London to-night."

"Oh, then I suppose you have learned to talk French gibberish?"

Edward bowed.

"Touch him up a bit, Jane; let us hear whether he has been among the Mounseers."

"If

"If these ladies wish it, Sir, I will translate, word for word, what your daughter said to her friend, which must convince you I understand the language in which she spoke."

"Well, that is not a reason why you should be a better or a more honest man, so set off about your business. I say once more."

"I wish I was able to obey your injunctions, Sir; I am really too ill to walk any farther; you certainly can't object to my remaining under this hedge till daybreak, when I will endeavour to proceed on my journey."

"Only think," observed Jane, in Italian, again addressing her friend, "of the fellow understanding me; I dare say he has been some time in France; I have a great fancy to ask him."

Edward instantly replied in the same language, "I only wish, Ma'am, I could as easily convince you that neither you nor your friend had any thing to fear from my want

of honesty. I am not a common sailor, and have not been more this time than five days in France, when I fortunately made my escape in this disguise; and had I met with any humane person when I landed at Dover, who would have listened to my simple story, I might ere this have been in London, where I flatter myself I have friends, who would have repaid tenfold any obligations conferred upon me at such a time."

As the old gentleman was as ignorant of Italian as he was of French, he grew quite peevish, and insisted upon the girls accompanying him home, telling one of the servants to give the fellow six-pence, which was plenty to carry him to London; and to leave him to find the use of his limbs, which he would be bound he would be able to do as soon as their backs were turned. Edward rejected the proffered gift with some scorn, and had the satisfaction to perceive his compassionate young friend approved of the spirit he displayed. She
passed

passed him very close when she was obliged, in conformity to the old gentleman's orders, to accompany him home, and said, in a whisper, "I will endeavour to send you some assistance;" and, upon turning her head as she drew near a gate which led into the pleasure-grounds, she perceived he remained standing in the very spot where she had left him:—indeed he hardly knew how to move, except to stretch himself out again upon the cold ground; and could not help thinking the great man, whose benevolence did not seem very extensive, would have been better pleased had there been more truth in his daughter's report, as he seemed far more inclined to punish than to relieve the wants of his fellow-creatures.

CHAP. VII.

THE gentleman in question, who was a City Alderman, was by no means a bad character; but inclined to be so very much upon his guard against imposition, he frequently suffered a real object of charity to solicit in vain, for fear he should bestow his money upon those he considered as undeserving his bounty: for he acknowledged, during his walk back to the house, he approved of the young fellow's spirit, which was a strong proof he was no common, whining, canting beggar; therefore, if he was at the stile an hour hence, he would send him to some place where he might be taken

taken care of, which would be only following the golden rule, and that was one of his maxims.

“He certainly looked very ill, as far as they were able to distinguish by the light,” the young ladies observed; “and he must be a young man of a respectable family they should suppose, since he spoke both French and Italian far better than they did, who had been years studying both under excellent masters.”

Alderman Bulford's (for such was the gentleman's name) intention of letting him remain another hour exposed to the night air, and a very strong dew, did not meet the approbation of the generous Maria, who sent for her maid into her dressing-room the moment she reached the house, and told her, as she valued her friendship and protection, to get one of the men-servants, in whom she could confide, to accompany her, without loss of time, to the stable; and if the poor young man was unable to walk without assistance, they must endeavour

endeavour to support him to the nearest public-house, which, if she recollected right, was the Crown, where she would see he had every thing of the best the larder and cellar afforded; and to assure the landlady, who was a widow of a very good character, and to whom she had been particularly kind, that she would see her well paid."

The maid had no will but her mistress's, of whose generosity she had frequently received convincing proofs; therefore, after assuring her that her orders should be secretly obeyed, and punctually executed, she hastened down stairs, and calling the coachman, who was her greatest favourite among the men-servants, easily prevailed upon him to attend her to the stile, where, as they had been taught to expect, they found poor Edward, who, to avoid the cold, had once more crept into his former birth, where he must have passed the night, notwithstanding the ample supply of cash he had received, as he was absolutely unable

even

even to crawl any farther. With their assistance, however, he was once more able to rise; and, supported by the coachman's arm, who assured him it was not far, he made shift to reach the Crown, about half a mile distant from his resting-place, where, in pursuance of Mrs. Harris's, the lady's maid's orders, a good bed was immediately prepared for him, and a large bason of white-wine whey. She then returned home, and was not only praised, but handsomely rewarded, as well as the coachman, for the zeal she had displayed.

Particularly anxious to please so good a lady, she rose very early in the morning, and went to the Crown before her mistress was stirring. No one had been into the young man's room when she arrived; so she went and tapped at the door herself, the landlady following her up stairs. As no one answered, she knocked still harder, when, hearing the bed move, they entered together, and enquired how he found himself. Edward assured them he had

slept very comfortably, and was much better. The maid, whom he instantly recollected, said if she had known he had been asleep, she would not have disturbed him, but she was impatient to enquire how he was; requesting he would lay still, as she could not stop a moment. The landlady begged to know what he would chuse for his breakfast. He said he meant to rise presently, when he should be obliged to her for a basin of tea. That she promised him in a few minutes, but told him he must not think of rising yet, fatigued and ill as he was the preceding night. She would wait upon him herself, and in bed he should remain for at least two hours longer.

She was very kind, Edward said, and requested to know the name of the lady who he was convinced had saved his life, as he really believed that passing the night where she had found him, would have been more than sufficient to have killed him, ill as he already was.

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"I am not at liberty to reveal my mistress's name, Sir," replied the maid, "or I would readily oblige you; but a servant's bread, you know, sometimes depends upon their discretion; and my young lady is, to be sure, the best mistress, and the sweetest tempered creature that ever existed: but she don't wish any one to know how affected she was by your story, for I will assure you the tears stood in her eyes while she was giving me orders about getting you removed here.—But you know, Mrs. Munford, her friends might blame her, for God knows, the Alderman is not very tender-hearted; but then, as he says, he certainly pays every body their own, and a swinging sum to the poor-rates; and so he thinks himself main good, and it would ill become such as me to say any thing to the contrary: though he is no kin to my mistress, but still he might make a mountain of a mole-hill, if he was to hear how charitable she had been."

"Very

"Very true, Mrs. Harris," observed the landlady, "God will reward your mistress sooner or later, for all she has done for me and mine;—I am sure I am bound to pray for her on my bended knees, every day that goes over my head; and for you too, Mrs. Harris, for the matters of that, and I should scorn to tattle about any thing that might cause her anger, when she only deserves praise. I am sure this young gentleman is too sensible of her goodness and generosity, to say or do any thing likely to bring her into trouble; God in heaven will bless her for all her good deeds to the distressed."

"You have done me no more than justice, Mrs. Munford," replied Edward; "yet I should wish to know where I could at some future period send——"

"Bless you, Sir," interrupted the maid, "my mistress is very rich; and as for the trifle she will have to pay Mrs. Munford upon your account, why it is like a drop of water in the sea, and I am sure she would be highly offended if you was ever to think

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of returning it ;—why, she could spare a hundred pounds easier than I could as many pence, and would, for the matters of that, at any time, to do a charitable action. Her father allows her plenty of money, and her mother always keeps a hoard for her to go to ; ah ! many a brave pound does she give away in the course of a year, for she is not like the old Alderman, going about to enquire first whether it be a truly deserving object. She an't fond of such cautious charity ;—but, as I was saying, Sir, if you ever should chance to see her again, I would not advise you to seem to know her ; you might just take off your hat to her, or so, to convince her you remember her goodness towards you ; but as for thanks, she neither likes nor desires them, I have often heard her say.”

From the maid's discourse, Edward was convinced her mistress had not mentioned having given him her purse ; he therefore chose to be equally discreet, merely saying,

“ Then

“Then it was not your young Lady who sent you to enquire after me this morning?”

“No, Sir, I came of my own accord; she is not up yet, but I knew she would be anxious to hear how you was, so I ran over before her bell rung;—but I must hurry back again; if she has any message, or any thing else to send you, I will come again.”

“I must entreat you would present my best respects to your generous Lady, and assure her no one can more gratefully feel or remember the obligations she has laid me under. From what you have said, I dare not hope, even at any future time, to renew my thanks in person; as I am resolved, even at the expence of my feelings, to convince her of my discretion.”

“I will repeat your very words to her, Sir, and will bring you her answer, if possible; you won’t think of setting off before twelve o’clock at soonest?”

“Certainly not, my good Mrs. Harris, and I request you will believe I shall endeavour,

endeavour, ere long, to convince you that you have not obliged an ungrateful person."

"I took you for a gentleman born the first moment, Sir, and you are determined to convince me I was not mistaken in my conjectures;" hastening home, where she was informed her mistress's bell had rung twice. Indeed, Maria had not slept very well, as she was angry with herself for having acted with such privacy respecting the youth she had been so anxious to relieve, who might, perhaps, come to the house to return her his thanks, which would be particularly unpleasant.

The appearance of Harris, who immediately informed her where she had been, and the cautions she had given Mrs. Munford and the young stranger, greatly relieved her mind. Harris then repeated, as nearly as she could remember, Edward's message, declaring her solemn belief of his being a real gentleman, as both his words and looks bespoke him of no mean origin; and

and as for his skin, his face excepted, it was as white as the Prince of Wales's, and no disparagement to his Royal Highness neither, she was convinced.

Maria smiled at her maid's enthusiasm, declaring she was very happy he was well enough to pursue his journey. Harris should pay him another visit, and enforce her former cautions; for she should be very averse to having it known she had sent him to the Crown, as it might appear an affront to Alderman Bulford, who, no doubt, would have done the same thing, if he had not been offended by having been so unnecessarily alarmed for her safety; for he actually had sent to the stile at the time he had resolved, and had concluded, from not finding him there, he was, as he suspected, an impostor. This, however, was of no consequence to the young man; but it was an additional reason for its being kept a secret that he had been removed by her desire.

As

As soon as breakfast was over, therefore, Harris was dispatched to desire Edward would neither directly nor indirectly take any measures to discover who her mistress was, for the reasons before related.

Mrs. Munford, who had not suffered her patient (having very skilfully dressed the wound in his head) to rise, chose to be present during their interview, and protested she would be as secret as the grave.

Edward renewed his former promises and thanks, and as soon as Mrs. Harris was gone, rose; and his coat having been thoroughly cleaned, made himself tolerably decent. He then thought of setting off, but the landlady protested he should not walk; several stages would pass the door in the course of the day, and he had much better think of having some dinner before he started.

Edward was greatly inclined to favour the good old woman as much as possible, therefore agreed to her proposal; and his generosity, when he found the strength of his

his purse, added considerably to the civility of the never inhospitable Mrs. Munford. The first stage was unfortunately full within-side ; but as he was very anxious to be in London, Edward mounted the roof, and had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile, before he perceived Maria and her maid walking upon the foot-path adjoining the road. He had but a very imperfect view of her the night before ; he was convinced she was very handsome, and had she been particularly plain, he would have discovered beauties in her countenance he would scarcely have noticed in the finest face and form, whose owner was not blessed with an equal share of feeling : but, prejudice apart, Maria was a most lovely girl. He ventured to take off his hat, and never felt more flattered than when she kindly smiled in return for his compliment, gracefully waving her hand as he receded from her sight.—“ May every blessing attend thee, lovely creature ! ” he mentally ejaculated ; “ we shall probably never meet again ;

again; yet to hear of thy felicity, methinks, would greatly increase my own; but never, by any imprudent enquiries, will I expose thee to the anger of those, whose own selfishness might misconstrue thy innocent behaviour, and reprove thee for having, at the risk of their displeasure, done so essential a service to a poor fellow like myself." He strained his eyes to catch a last glimpse of her elegant form; and when it was no longer visible, he drew forth the very smart purse he owed to her benevolence, which he had but slightly examined at Mrs. Munford's. It was pale blue spotted with silver, and upon a pair of gold enamelled sliders was, *croyes que je vous aime*.—"This is surely the gift of some favoured mortal!" thought he; "she was perhaps not aware what she was about, when she so generously bestowed it upon such a miserable looking object as myself. Well, I will preserve it with the greatest care, in hopes, at some future period, chance may introduce me to its

its former owner, when I should wish to convince her how highly I prize her gift."

It still contained seven guineas and some silver—more money than Edward had ever yet been in possession of at one time; he was therefore almost sorry he had accepted such a sum, as the seventh part of it would have been more than he should have expended, or wanted:—he, however, returned it into his pocket, and entered into conversation with the coachman, who came from Chatham, and told him a very daring robbery had been committed only the night before, by two footpads disguised like sailors, in the neighbourhood of Rochester; the rascals had, however, very fortunately been taken, and, from his description of them, Edward had no doubt but they were the very villains who had so basely plundered him of his small stock of cash; and could not help rejoicing they were so soon likely to meet with their deserts, while he was more convinced such wretches are punished even in this world, to deter others from following so baneful an example.

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CHAP. VIII.

EDWARD having told the coachman he was a stranger to London, and that he was going into Crutched Friars, he set him down at the foot of London Bridge, directing him which way to take.

“Now has my beloved benefactor reached England in safety?” he wondered, as he slowly proceeded through some of the most populous streets in this great metropolis? or does his brother live where he did when we left England? Most probably, for merchants in such an extensive line seldom change their abode while in business.”

Most

Most of those whom he met or passed, either made some remark upon his appearance, or turned their heads to take a second survey of him; for though his coat was very clean, and did not fit him badly, its scanty cut, and the martial cock of his large hat, so plainly evinced they were both foreign, that he excited general surprise and curiosity, and was therefore very glad when, having perfectly recollected the house, he approached the well-known door, upon which, to his infinite joy, he read the name of Bloomfield. He gave one gentle tap; it was very speedily opened by an elderly woman, whose face was quite familiar to him; and before he could enquire whether Captain Bloomfield was in England, she exclaimed—

“Why mercy upon me! surely I have seen that face before, pale as it now is:—but no, it cannot be him; the Captain said but this blessed morning, his dear son must have gone to the bottom:—ah, those were his very words!”

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VOL.

“ And does my dear benefactor honour me so far as to style me his son, my good Mrs. Collins ? for I assure you I am that very Edward Fortescue you were so kind as to recollect. Where is my best friend ? ”

“ Thank God ! thank God ! Why, the good Captain will be ready to jump out of his skin for joy ; welcome back, a thousand and a thousand times ! The Captain is not at home, no more indeed are any of the family ;—but do you come in, and tell me by what Providence you have been saved ; for the ship I suppose sunk, as the Captain was afraid she would ? ”

Edward was following the old lady down stairs, and hastily answering her numerous enquiries, that he might put a few questions in his turn, when there was another knock at the door, which forced her to return, and met in a sailor who came also to enquire for the Captain. As he was one of those who had been with him during his last voyage, Edward instantly recollected the voice, and hastened back into the hall, where he was,

after a momentary start of surprise mingled with joy, most cordially greeted by his old shipmate, who began eagerly to enquire where he had been since they parted company, and what had become of the crazy hulk he had taken charge of; which being no better than those the first belonged to, he supposed had foundered somewhere near home, for he saw plain enough by his rigging, that he had been in an enemy's port: however, it mattered not a chew of tobacco, since he had returned in time to go out with them again."

"Where are you going out then so soon?" asked Edward, "and with whom?"

"The brave Captain Bloomfield; and you may be sure we shall, every man that came home with him, again accompany such a commander; for you must know, a foolish fellow took it into his head to die the other day, when he ought to have been serving his King and country, for his ship was almost ready to put to sea: however, my jolly master, you know the old saying,

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“ ’tis an ill wind that blows nobody good ;” she was immediately offered to our brave Captain, and he accepted the command, and we, not having been paid off, were turned over to the Prince of Wales ; so, thank God, we shall soon have another round with the *Maunseers*, and you, I am sure, will come along, though that d——d French meagre soup don’t seem to fit well upon your stomach. I don’t like neither to see your upper works out of repair ; but never mind—old England soon sets us all to rights. I can see you are heart-whole, and that’s the main chance.—The Captain told me this morning I must set out for Portsmouth to-morrow. Now I only want to spend one more day in London ; do, my dear friend, request the favour for me—I know he won’t refuse any thing you ask of him ?”

Edward scarcely comprehended great part of the honest Tar’s clear narrative, and wanted to hear how they weathered the storm, when they arrived at Portsmouth, and where the Prince of Wales was bound :

all which questions were no sooner put, than answered.

“ Our old bark stood it stoutly, and we arrived safe in port the second morning after we parted from you. The ship we are going out in, is bound for the West-Indies for three years, and so I ask you again, will you go with us ?”

“ To be sure I will !” was the reply.

“ Then that is hearty, by G—d ! and now pray, my brave master, satisfy me a little bit in my turn ; for I began to think, nay, we were all partly sure, you had been hawled off to Davy Jones’s locker.”

Edward gave him a brief account of every thing that had befallen him, and the old woman was every now and then screaming with horror and surprise, when a young man, the door being on the jar, hastily entered the hall, and was running up stairs, when he caught sight of Edward, whom he slackened his pace to survey, with a sort of ironical smile, which made him presume his dress was superlatively ridiculous ; nor could

could he forbear smiling in his turn, while the old woman called out—

“Where now, Master William? you are always in such a hurry. Do you know who this young gentleman is? No, say; for I remember you were at school when he was here last.”

“Then it must be Mr. Fortescue,” cried William, hastily stepping back, and putting out his hand, saying, “Am I mistaken, or not?”

“Oh you are right for once in your life, you wild-brained thing!” cried the old woman; “you know it don’t often happen, as I always say.”

Edward took the proffered hand, while William said, “I knew it could be no one else; I read the name in your looks, dame Collins. Have you seen my uncle, Mr. Fortescue?”

“That pleasure I have yet in store, Sir.”

“I am sure it will be reciprocal whenever you meet; and only last night we were talking of you for an hour, or more, when

my uncle said he would give a thousand pounds to any one who would assure him you were still in the land of the living. I think I must go in search of him, on purpose to claim the reward. Why, dame Collins, that sum would last me about six months to dash it away in style."

"It would not last you as many weeks," replied the old woman; "therefore I hope your uncle will save his money till you know how to make a better use of it; but pray, may I know where you might be going in such haste?"

"I am not going any where now:—but do pray, Mr. Fortescue, come into the parlour; do you, dame Collins, take the servant under your protection. Have you dined, Sir? What have you got in the house?"

"You told me you should not dine at home, Sir, please to remember."

"Very true, I certainly was engaged. You shall accompany me where I am going, Mr. Fortescue."

"Had

"Had I no other reason than my dress, Mr. Bloomfield, I must have begged leave to decline your kind proposal."

"That shall not keep you at home, I am determined," he replied, running up stairs hastily.

"There never was such a wild youth," said the old woman; "but he is so droll, and so good tempered, he would make a body laugh if they were dying, sometimes, I verily believe. Ah! every body loves him both in town and country; he is our general favourite, with all his youthful follies; for never was there such a boy for pleasure, though he would sit up all night, rather than leave any thing undone; and I can say that for him, his father would trust him sooner than any clerk in his counting-house, where he has been since seven this morning:—but mum!"

At that moment the object of her panegyric returned with an arm full of wearing apparel.

“ Here, my good friend, chuse among my wardrobe ; suit yourself, and I will be your valet.”

Edward now, with truth, pleaded his ill health, and the still open wound in his head. The old housekeeper wondered he had not remarked how unfit Mr. Fortescue looked to join any of his riotous parties.

“ I am very sorry ; he certainly does not look well, but I was in hopes it was chiefly owing to fatigue and hunger ; so why don't you see about getting us some dinner ? for I shan't leave my uncle's best friend at home alone.”

Nor could Edward prevail upon him to fulfil his engagement.

“ No, no, dame Collins will be able to give us something or other very soon, if she bustles ; though this is really a poor house to come to just now. My father and mother are at Brighton, and my sister is at Greenwich with a friend ; add to which, I seldom dine at home, any more than my uncle.”

“ Well,

“ Well, well, only have a little patience, and I will do my best for you, gentlemen,” hurrying away for that purpose.

William had long, from his uncle's letters, and still more favourable report, esteemed his adopted son, and knew he could not pay his court more effectually to the Captain, than by treating his beloved *elevé* with every mark of politeness. As soon as they were alone, he therefore expatiated upon his uncle's anxiety, who was really quite low-spirited, and almost repented having accepted the command of the frigate he was going out in, as he could not bear the idea of leaving England before he learned some tidings of his much-regretted Edward; whose heart overflowed with gratitude while listening to these proofs of his benefactor's attachment towards him.

In his turn he related his adventures to his kind host, concluding his narrative by telling him that the bounty of an unknown lady, whom he had very unintentionally frightened, which had induced him, by way

of relieving her terror, to enter into a few details, had enabled him to procure a night's lodging, and to pursue his journey upon the roof of a stage-coach, which, to a person fatigued as he had been, was real luxury."

William was so interested in his recital, that he had forgot he was hungry, though he was not sorry when the old housekeeper came running in to let them know dinner was served in the eating parlour;—thither they were adjourning, when they heard a carriage drive up to the door, upon the roof of which sat the sailor who had so immediately followed Edward into Crutched Friars."

"My uncle I am sure!" cried William, running to the street-door.

The moment it was opened, "Here we are!" bawled out the sailor, with an air of triumph; "the Captain is in the hold!" who scarcely suffered the step to be let down, before he jumped out, and caught Edward in his arms. Indeed, no son could

have

have been dearer to him ; he even shed tears of joy, not unmixed with regret, when he gazed upon his pallid countenance.

The sailor followed them into the house, and as soon as he found an opportunity to speak, said, " There, Master Edward, I am the lad for expedition you find, when I carry good news ; and I have obtained double my wish by way of a recompence, and a King's picture in the bargain, to last the day, so I have not much time do you see to spare just now. I ran all the way to the Admiralty, where I thought I should find the Captain ; but I was obliged to mount aloft coming back, to make that fellow at the helm bear a hand ; so when he did not flog, I kicked him behind to jog his memory, being very handy to him."

Edward thanked him very cordially ; and the Captain desired him not to exceed two days more in town, promising to reward him still farther when he came on board.

He then accompanied the young men into the eating parlour, where a comfortable, though not a sumptuous, dinner awaited them. After which, and hearing Edward's adventures, the Captain insisted upon his going to bed, and sent for a surgeon to examine his wound, who assured him a few days' quiet rest would complete his cure. Dame Collins was therefore appointed his nurse, as the Captain was very anxious to have him totally recovered before he went to sea again, rightly judging how much he would regret being left behind.

The brave Captain was truly affected with what his beloved pupil had undergone, and shuddered at what might have been the consequence. He bestowed great applause upon the intrepidity which had induced him to attempt making his escape, and promised to get the companion of his flight put on board the Prince, only wishing he had either leisure or power to punish the unfeeling wretches who had so nearly been

been the cause of his death by their inhumanity; while he called down blessings upon the friendly female who had so opportunely relieved his necessities. He then told him what money was due to him, offering to give every necessary order respecting his future equipment.

Edward had no will of his own; therefore readily promised to submit to a proper regimen, and a short confinement, that he might, with renewed health and spirits, assist in repaying what he considered himself in debt to the *Mounseers*.

CHAP. IX.

DURING the ensuing week, Edward mended daily, and by way of completing his cure, the Captain, who was very busy in settling his own affairs, previous to his again leaving England, advised his nephew to take him down into the country every night, as sleeping in so pure an air would be of infinite service to him. He would accompany them when his business allowed him sufficient leisure.

Mr. Bloomfield had a very elegant villa about seven miles from London, in one of the numerous villages adjoining Epping Forest; but was now at Brighthelmstone with

his

his Lady, for the benefit of sea-bathing, and where the Captain had spent a few days upon his first arrival, as he would not hear of his brother's returning to town a moment sooner than he had at first intended, upon his account, knowing both houses were equally open for his reception.

William readily promised to oblige his uncle ; though Edward, fearful he should be a restraint upon this gay young Cit, would willingly have excused him ; but he assured him he was particularly fond of variety, and as he had both horses and a gig at his command, he should enjoy these jaunts in such excellent company.

“ Why, the ride will do one good, and keep the other out of mischief,” observed the Captain, “ therefore it will answer two good purposes.”—And it was agreed they should leave town the following evening, which was Saturday, and return to breakfast on the Monday. The Captain was already engaged to dine with some friends,

friends, or he would have been of the party.

His *protegé* had, however, nearly recovered his natural colour, and was amply provided, thanks to his munificence, with every sort of wearing apparel : he had also given orders respecting his uniform, but told him he must be contented to appear like a landsman for a few days, as his tailor could not get his blue coat ready sooner ; and about five o'clock the next day, after what William called an early, and Edward thought a late dinner, they set out for Weston in a very smart gig. It was too late when they arrived for the latter to discover any of the surrounding beauties ; he therefore, after an excellent night, rose very early to reconnoître, but found William had preceded him into the gardens. The morning was delightful, but he declined shewing his friend the lions till after breakfast. Church was only in the afternoon ; therefore they should have plenty of time

time to dress, and see all the great folks in the village before dinner.

As Edward's clothes were of William's ordering, they were far more fashionable than any he had ever yet worn, and he had therefore seldom looked better; though, in his own mind, he gave a decided preference to his uniform:—a cockade was the only badge of his profession he now displayed, which William thought such an addition to his hat, that he was resolved to go into the Militia, that he might enjoy a similar privilege.

Being both adorned soon after breakfast—
“Now for our ramble,” said he; “this is about the time that our neighbours begin to shew themselves at their doors and windows; and I will treat you, as far as I am able, with the birth, parentage, and education of all the most distinguished people in our village. A stranger is sure to bring all the old creatures out of their nests.”

“I think

“ I think I should have been far more likely to excite their curiosity, had I come down in my *Republican uniform*, which, you remember, excited your mirth before you knew me.”

“ Why, I must agree it was a striking dress,” replied William, “ but it would not amuse in this village, where dress and fashion are the chief study. Being with me, you must make up your mind to be set down for a City buck of the first class. I only wish I was as tall as you are, though I hope I have not done growing. I think, however, they will give me credit for my humility, as I certainly do not appear to my usual advantage in your company; and I know they do not think me very deficient in vanity. My father is perhaps more generous to me than I deserve, and is not a little blamed for encouraging my propensity to dissipation, as they term my love of pleasure, by these mean grovelling misers; he would never forgive me though, he has frequently told me, if I were to run in
debt.

debt. So when I am very short of cash, I do penance in the country for a month or six weeks ;—therefore, my dear friend, there is an advantage in having a country house, or I might be at such times at a loss. Of late I have been rather more economical, and have not spent more than a couple of days here all the summer, or, more properly, since my father and mother have been at such a distance. But once more come along ;—you seem very lazily inclined this morning ; or are you afraid of turning the head of every pretty girl we may meet ?”

“ I am afraid love is not much worshipped among these votaries of Plutus,” replied Edward, as they sallied forth.

Mr. Bloomfield’s house was situated upon an extensive green, and commanded a most delightful prospect. The gardens were kept in excellent order, and laid out with infinite taste ; it was therefore denominated the great house, and its owner was considered

considered by far the most opulent man in the neighbourhood.

Edward was delighted with both the house and gardens, and declared he should not think it any hardship, were he to be told he should spend the remainder of his days there.

“Then your disposition does not bear much resemblance to mine,” replied William; “the first winter I was doomed to vegetate here, would be the last of my existence; even my father dislikes it in the dreary season, for we have such a set of neighbours, they are absolute torments, though they pay me a vast deal of court;—not because they either esteem or even like me, for believe me I am not their dupe; the respect I meet with may safely be placed to the score of my father’s gold;—besides, he is allowed to keep a remarkably good table; and though they all blame what they consider as being very extravagant, they are all particularly anxious to partake of the good things of this world, therefore they condemn

condemn what they so greatly enjoy. This is a question I have more than once put to them, but they are very slow at taking such hints. Perhaps I am indebted to my father's riches for their forbearance, or to the hopes, that those who have maiden daughters, nieces, or cousins, entertain of becoming nearer related to me.—But which way shall we go, to the right or left? We are surrounded you perceive by boxes, which our neighbours dignify with the name of villas."

"I act at present under your orders, therefore must request you will lead the way."

"Then wheel to the left," replied William, "for behold my predictions are verified; we have drawn all the good souls either to their doors or windows, and they are now dying with curiosity to discover who you are; so come along, that you may take a nearer survey of the good folks."

Their progress was arrested as they were passing the first house from Mr. Bloomfield's,

field's, by an elderly lady, who opening a sash, assailed William with a volume of polite enquiries, which he answered as laconically as his innate politeness would allow. She hoped Mr. and Mrs. Bloomfield found benefit from sea-bathing; his sister enjoyed her health at Greenwich, &c. At last the young men were suffered to proceed; and when out of hearing, William observed, "That is the most respectable woman in the neighbourhood; rather too precise and formal, but, upon the whole, she is a very good character, and makes a respectable figure upon a very moderate income. She is the only friend my mother has here; but seldom or ever dines or sups from home, not chusing to incur obligations she cannot with propriety return. Two maid-servants comprise her household; and though she seldom goes out, and has still more rarely company at home, she is generally esteemed even by those who take the liberty of denominating her prudent economy, ill-judged parsimony."

They

They were passing the garden of an adjoining villa, when William's discourse was interrupted by a voice from within the paling, calling out—"Come along, Dicky, we shall be late in town."

Having advanced a few steps, they caught sight of the speaker, an elderly, short, ill-favoured figure, who was hobbling, rather than walking, by the help of a stick, towards a parlour window, calling out, "Peggy, where are you? What will you have for dinner, besides what I have ordered for the servants? You are not fond of boiled beef;—I am going out, you know; but there is the calf's heart I brought home yesterday, or the sheep's kidneys which I could not eat last night; though they are very good, cook says, and I have seen them."

They did not hear the reply.

"Now what think you of that gentleman, Edward, who you find wants to arrange the whole of his Sunday's dinner at home before he goes out?"

“ I think he seems to live better himself than he appears to cater for the family ; for I presume it is the butler addressing the housekeeper.”

“ You never was more mistaken ; he is really the master of that handsome house, and that is his coach which is now driving round. Dicky, whom you heard him summons, is his coachman. The gentleman himself is by trade a cooper, to which he was bound by the parish of St. Martin’s-le-Grand. Peggy, whom you supposed to be the housekeeper, is his fourth wife, and it is confidently asserted he is worth a plumb, and more. That really decent equipage is generally denominated his market cart, as he brings all his provisions from London, where he buys every thing at the best hand ; for he never trusts a servant to lay out a farthing, if he can help it, and many a one has he dismissed for giving away a draught of small beer, or a dry crust. Three days in the week he dines in town, and if not at a club, at a cook-shop ; and on those days he

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never allows any thing to be dressed at home, except a kidney or a sheep's heart are broiled; but this being Sunday, he has stretched a point you find, for he seldom dines out on this day. He has been known some few times, by way of a great regale, to allow Peggy a pound of tripe, or sausages, but not to chuse;—fact upon my honour! which is still more extraordinary, you will think, when I assure you, from undoubted authority, Peggy brought him seven hundred a year, not three years ago, marrying because she could not afford to keep her carriage, she alledged, upon so small an income; and yet she is not allowed to ride in her husband's five times in the course of a year. The servants are even stinted in every article they eat or drink. His potatoes he buys by the sack, and has them weighed out regularly:—in short, I should never have done, were I to repeat the hundredth part of what I have heard of that old rascal. He is, and ever has been, my aversion; surely dame Nature never

intended he should have rode in his own carriage;—to have stood behind the counter of a chandler's shop, ought to have been the height of his ambition, and the summit of his preferment."

"He would have been an old villain in any line," was the reply.

They had now reached another house, from whence sallied a lusty matron and her two daughters, who had many enquiries to make after Mr. Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield's health, before they suffered the friends to pursue their walk; when William told his companion she was a Clergyman's widow, who had lately entered the pale of Methodism, was in consequence grown extremely godly, and had morning and evening prayers, which she wished to make public for the benefit of her devout neighbours. "Unfortunately," he proceeded, "I called upon her one morning respecting a note she had entrusted to my father's care, when her whole family were at their morning devotion; and, according to her invariable rule, was
admitted

admitted into the parlour, where she was holding forth for the benefit of her daughters and household, as well as some few of her dependant neighbours, whose souls she had taken into her charge. Unwilling to disturb them, and having received a most gracious smile from the preacher, I behaved with the greatest decency till she began the hymn, with which she concluded her morning orisons, when an old grey parrot joined so ridiculously in the chorus, imitating all his mistress's movements, that I was obliged to stop my mouth with my handkerchief. What my looks expressed, I know not; but certain it is, the whole congregation burst out into a most immoderate fit of laughter, in which I joined most heartily;—even the two young ladies were unable to suppress their mirth, and the bird appeared the most diverted of the party. It fell to my share to make excuses for every one; and as I never had heard the parrot sing hymns before, though he did it as regularly as his mistress hitherto, to her no

small edification, my apologies were accepted, though I have laughed at the bare recollection of the absurd scene very frequently since, when talking of the old fanatic and her parrot."

When they reached the next villa, they perceived, notwithstanding it was the Sabbath, an elderly tall thin man arranging a variety of flower-pots before his door:—indeed he was so busily employed, he did not even notice the young men as they passed.

"That man is, or more properly was, an architect," said William; "he made his fortune, in a great measure, by marriage, and soon kicked the silly body that enabled him to decline trade, out of doors, and then generously allowed her twenty pounds a year, averring it was more than enough for any old woman to have at her command. His cook, or, as she styles herself, his house-keeper, has since supplied her place. About six months ago the wife died, when Mrs. Jane requested him to make her an honest woman,

woman, probably too arduous a task for him to undertake, as he peremptorily declined complying with her wishes. She threatened to expose him, to leave his house, to make him ashamed of himself, &c. The old fellow valued not what she could say or do—he was above the world, and if she did not wish to be kicked out of doors, she would hold her impudent tongue. Silence then ensued, and the contest was given up; and, like most lovers' quarrels, they have been better friends ever since; but about three weeks ago, he was seized with a paralytic stroke, and was in such imminent danger for four-and-twenty hours, it was thought every moment would have been his last; at least so said the Faculty. Madam Jane was all but raving; for her dear master had not made his will, though he had promised to do it a hundred times. What was to become of her? appealing to every soul who entered the house, if she had deserved such treatment. Most people consoled her by agreeing her's was a very hard case; while

others bade her remember the deceased wife, whom she had assisted to drive from her home, declaring this was only a just judgment; and in the climax of her grief and lamentations, the heir at law, a very low fellow, merely a journeyman carpenter, made his appearance, and ordered her instantly to deliver up all the keys in her possession, and then to pack up her rags, and take herself off; adding, he also meant to hang the yard dog which was laying by her, and by way of another very humane recreation, declared his resolution to wring off the head of an old favourite parrot the next morning fasting.

“ Mrs. Jane was supported in not resigning her trust while life remained, and the dispute was warmly carried on on both sides for some time, when, behold, in the midst of this violent debate, the old man opened his eyes, and recovered his speech; and being soon informed, as you will believe, of the cause of the dispute below, which he had heard, without being able to enquire

enquire what it meant, he instantly gave orders to have the fellow kicked out of the house, and forbade ever again to set foot within his walls: and the impudent rascal really was served as he desired, by Mrs. Jane's friends. The first thing the old man did, after recovering his reason, was to make a will wholly in Mrs. Jane's favour, to the utter exclusion of his nephew."

"He was very properly punished," replied Edward. "But pray who secludes themselves within these high walls, which certainly give a very monastic appearance to the habitation?"

"These walls enclose the house of one of the greatest originals in the village, and one of its most opulent inhabitants. He was formerly a very good kind of a tradesman; dealt in snuff and tobacco, and resided in Newgate Street; but about seven years ago, owing to the death of a rich relation, he became master of that villa, and a very large sum of money in the Funds. His predecessor having particularly

recommended his housekeeper to his care, out of pure gratitude he has continued her in her post; though it is now confidently affirmed he is grown even fonder of her than ever her late master was; and I am sure you will give him credit for his taste and discernment, when I inform you she is twenty years his senior. He is not more than forty, and one of the completest fools that ever existed. She, however, rules his household with the most despotic sway, estranges him from all his family and former connections, and has induced him to surround his mansion by these high walls, that they may not be subjected to the inconvenience of being overlooked by their low neighbours, for such she indiscriminately styles the inhabitants of Weston; though even Strafford, the cooper, is a Prince, when compared to himself."

William would have entered into some further details respecting this gentleman, if they had not been accosted by four ladies, a mother and three daughters, who had all a
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smile and a welcome for Mr. Bloomfield; wondered he was not at Brighton with his father and mother; declared his sister was become quite a truant; and had the young men been so inclined, would have walked forward with them:—but William did not chuse to profit by their condescension; he therefore soon made his parting bow, saying to Edward—

“ That is rather an unfortunate family. There are two brothers besides those three girls, who are, as you perceive, all marriageable; but having no fortunes, are very likely to hang some time longer on hand. They lost their father about four years ago. He was a solicitor of great eminence, and, like many more people, lived in a much greater style than his income, which was chiefly derived from the profits of his business, would support: and his children are paying the penalty of his folly, criminality, or imprudence, whichever you please to term his conduct, and would, no doubt, meet with much more commiseration

ration than has, or ever will fall to their share, had they borne their prosperity "*more meekly.*" But when Fortune appeared to smile upon them, they were haughty and overbearing. The mother was then called Madam Seldon, and would not have crossed this green on foot when dressed, even had her best friend been at the point of death; and actually, in addition to a very handsome coach, kept a sedan purely for her own use. At present, they with difficulty support the appearance of gentlewomen, and their whole suite consists of one maid; nay, so much are they humbled, that I am vain enough to believe I might now, without exposing myself to their ridicule, aspire to the hand of one of the Misses."

Edward hoped he meant to put them to the trial.

"No, faith! the girls, though handsome, were never to my taste. But here resides our Clergyman, or more properly our Rector's Curate, an Irishman, who is, honestly speaking, a disgrace both to his country and

cloth,

cloth, and cuts a prodigious figure upon sixty pounds a year;—this will not much surprise you when I inform you he has never paid a tradesman's bill since he took up his abode in this village, which he did about eighteen months ago. When any of his servants ask for money, he kicks them out of doors, as a slight punishment for their insolence; and when they have nothing in their larder, which has frequently happened of late, as neither butcher nor baker are inclined to give them any farther credit, they actually force themselves into some of their neighbours' houses, and half jest, half earnest, invite themselves to dinner. This has really been practised frequently; but of late they have adopted a newer method when thus pressed; they usually divide, so cannot bear to *dine alone*. My father has long both shunned and disliked them; yet even we are frequently plagued with their company, when it is impossible to give them a denial, that is, when we have other guests. Just before my father went to Brighton, they

dropped in one afternoon, when he happened to have a few select friends from town, among whom was a jeweller of the first eminence, a relation of my mother's, with whom the Divine soon scraped acquaintance, and in the course of the week happening to be in London, and by *mere accident* passing very near his shop, he could not do less than step in to enquire after his health; and was so struck with several things in his line, so much superior to any thing of the kind he had ever seen before, that he gave various orders, and was very pressing to have them executed. Not doubting either his probity or ability to satisfy his demands, plate and trinkets, to the amount of near sixty pounds, were speedily sent down to the Rev. Mr. Reynolds, which never have, nor never will be paid for. The parson will therefore most probably be arrested, if he does not quickly shift his quarters.

“ And thus have I led you round our green, and given, as I promised, the history of

of all our most distinguished neighbours, as they have been handed down to me."

"And a very curious set they are, I must acknowledge," replied Edward.

"You are perfectly right; though, except Reynolds, there are no absolute bad characters amongst them:—it is only the world as it goes, some better, and some worse. Mrs. Beaver is a very respectable member of society. Old Strafford, if he does no good, does little harm; there are people who like to hire servants from his house. The lady who owns the devout parrot, is supposed to be actuated by good intentions. Of the architect I can say but little; though, like his nearest neighbour, he has hurt no one but himself. And the lawyer's family are, notwithstanding their past conduct, more to be pitied than blamed. For Reynolds I offer no excuse. The snuff-man, as I always call him, makes great savings, which may enable his successor to do what he has not a heart to perform. Such, however, is the general run of society in

in the genteelest villages near the metropolis, with here and there a few exceptions.

“The good folks, with whose histories I have endeavoured to amuse you, have all, more or less, great pretensions to morality. One and all, they regularly attend divine worship, though some of them, I am convinced, go to Church merely for the express purpose of criticizing the congregation: however, it has a good appearance, as my father observes, and even hypocrisy is of less dangerous tendency to society than avowed profligacy.”

Before Edward could reply, a young man in a clerical dress came out of a very small house close to them, but which did not face the green. He appeared rather confused when he paid William the usual compliments, adding, “he did not know he was in the country;” and under pretence of the lateness of the hour, soon hurried away.

“That is the deceased lawyer’s eldest son,” said William, “and was bred to the same profession: however, upon the demise
of

of his father, he thought proper to study for the Church; and perhaps you will hardly credit me when I declare, the hovel he just emerged from, is where he practises oratory, under the tuition of the village shoemaker, or more properly cobbler, who is clerk of the parish, and sets himself up for a very learned man. A groom of my father's, a droll mischievous fellow, has several times watched him into the house, and declares he has seen him exalted upon an old bench in one corner of the stall, through a hole he purposely made in the window shutter, and holding forth as from the pulpit; the cobbler, meanwhile, directing him when to exalt, and when to lower his voice; how to move his arms, when to raise and lower his eyes, with various other instructions too numerous to repeat. The man compared the cobbler to the soldier placed at a distance, for a guide to young recruits when learning their exercise."

Edward laughed very heartily, and said,
"He thought no one could be admitted to

take orders, who had not received a proper education, and spent some time at one of the Universities."

"Such, I believe, is the law, or the rule, I hardly know which," replied William; "but even laws or rules may be evaded, or rendered subservient to the will or convenience of those they are meant to direct. The aspiring genius in question, is what is vulgarly called a "Term Trotter;" that is, not having a sufficient income to support himself at College, he pursues his studies at home, and only shews his face now and then among the Heads of the University, who are very little interested, I suppose, either in his advancement or proceedings."

"Why, considering he has so able a private tutor," observed Edward, "I think it very probable, notwithstanding the many disadvantages he labours under, he may attain a mitre before he dies."

Their morning's walk afforded them an ample fund for conversation the whole afternoon, and just before they sat down to supper,

supper, Captain Bloomfield joined them; and as he thought quiet, and change of air, much more likely to accelerate the complete recovery of his *protégé*, than his returning every morning to London with William, he contrived to find him employment at Weston, where he was in consequence left the following morning, young Bloomfield promising to return thither in the evening, as even his love for pleasure gave way to the increasing esteem he felt for his newly acquired friend, independent of the satisfaction he had in obliging his uncle.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

ON the Wednesday evening the Captain accompanied his nephew to Weston, to inform Edward it was necessary he should present him at the Admiralty the following morning; they in consequence returned to London together. Edward's uniform was ready; and his benefactor, who had provided him with a stock of linen, and every other *et cetera*, desired him to adorn himself as soon as they reached Crutched Friars. The dress he was ordered to assume, informed him upon what errand he was going to the Admiralty; as his generous patron, who was more anxious to promote his interest than

to

to forward his own, had obtained him a Lieutenantcy.

Tears of gratitude stood in his eyes when he joined the delighted Captain, who gaily wished him joy, protesting his recent promotion was the mere reward of his talents and merit, as his journal, memorandum-book, and other manuscripts having been left on board the Ocean when he took possession of the prize, they had been, with his own, delivered into the hands of the Lords of the Admiralty; therefore he might rest assured he owed his present rank far more to that circumstance, than to his influence, as it was even contrary to the established rule to give any man an Officer's commission, who had not served his Majesty at least six years.

Edward, highly flattered, and very much elated, was more anxious than ever to prove himself worthy of the exception which had been made in his favour; and would have set out for Portsmouth that very evening, as he understood the Lords of the Admiralty were

were very anxious for the sailing of the Prince of Wales; but both the Captain and William refused to part with him so soon, the former vowing he should first see a little of London if his health would permit, and accordingly took him to every public place of diversion then open.

Such a life of dissipation was, however, little suited to the taste of Fortescue, though he was very grateful for William's unremitting endeavours to amuse him; but was by no means sorry when the Captain informed him he wished him to precede him on board. Could his generous young friend have left home during his father's absence, he would have accompanied him down to Portsmouth; but this satisfaction being denied him, he took a most affectionate leave of Edward, sincerely wishing he had also been a sailor, as he greatly regretted their necessary separation, alledging that three years, the supposed time of his friend's absence, seemed an age to look forward to. A hundred changes might take place during
such

such a lapse of time his uncle and friend were now going for ; and if not on a more dangerous voyage, upon much more dangerous service; and into a worse climate. Had he been to accompany them, these fears would never have occurred to him, he assured Fortescue, when he bade him a final adieu at the inn where the Portsmouth mail started from, after making him promise to write to him whenever opportunity offered.

The Captain soon followed his pupil, taking Brighton in his way; and every thing being ready, they sailed with a fleet of merchantmen for the West Indies, which they reached without meeting with any incident worth recording; but several seamen, and one of the Lieutenants fell a sacrifice to the yellow fever soon after their arrival. The Captain, therefore, had it in his power to again promote his young friend, who continued to deserve every mark of his favour.

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We shall not enter into a detailed account of their adventures in the West-Indies, as nothing occurred during three years and a half that they remained upon that station, worthy of notice.

Early the following Spring, Captain Bloomfield was appointed to convoy a small homeward-bound fleet to England. He had been several times engaged with the enemy during his cruises from one island to another; his ship was therefore rather out of repair, and he was also very short of hands. Every precaution was however taken to ensure their safe return, and none had been more indefatigable in their duty than Edward, who had been third Lieutenant from nearly the time of their arrival at Jamaica. He had also greatly distinguished himself in every engagement in which they had participated, and was a general favourite among the officers and crew, the second Lieutenant excepted, who being of a jealous, stubborn disposition, was as generally disliked. Indeed the

Captain

Captain had not scrupled to say he had no very high opinion of his courage, and the crew knew he was a tyrant in his heart, though his awe of the Captain was a great check to his natural malevolence.

They had been at sea about seven weeks, when the Captain, who had hitherto enjoyed a most excellent state of health, owing to his regular way of life, was seized with a violent fever, and was pronounced, at the end of five days, to be in imminent danger; when, to add to their misfortune, a heavy gale of wind sprang up, and dispersed the merchantmen under their protection.

Hitherto Edward had been his beloved friend's head nurse, seldom quitting his cabin, and spending every night by his bed-side; but when his own life, and those of so many more were in danger, he was fain to lend his assistance to save the ship. At the expiration of four-and-twenty hours, the storm abated; but they had totally lost sight of the fleet under their convoy, and the frigate being in a shattered condition
before,

before, had suffered great damage both in her yards and rigging. But the first Lieutenant no sooner thought her out of danger, than he told Edward to resume his station near their beloved Captain, as he would give orders respecting the necessary repairs. The second Lieutenant, who was ever anxious to display the power he possessed, murmured at the favour he thought thus conferred upon Edward, who he hinted ought to remain upon deck while he went below, as being the most fatigued of late, besides entitled by his superior rank to this mark of preference. His insinuations were, however, of no avail, and Edward returned to his friend, whom he had frequently visited during the storm; but he had now the inexpressible sorrow to find him in a state of delirium, owing, as the surgeon said, to the violent motion of the vessel, which had greatly increased the fever. The late dread of going to the bottom was trifling, compared to what Edward now felt for his respected friend and patron,

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who did not even recognize his well-known voice. Edward therefore lost all hopes of his recovery, as he continued in the same state during the two succeeding days.

The damage the ship had sustained, had been repaired as well as circumstances would admit; and the now commanding Officer assured the crew they should reach home in safety, notwithstanding their late misfortune. Having lain to for that purpose, they were fortunate enough to collect the scattered merchantmen together, with whom they once more set sail for the Downs; and on the third morning after the storm, they were within a day's sail of the Land's End, when three of the enemy's ships appeared in the offing. It was therefore thought prudent to immediately disperse the convoy, and to make the best preparations in their power to act upon the defensive.

The Captain's delirium had subsided, but a state of apparent insensibility, with which it had been succeeded, had not raised the

surgeon's hopes, who thought him in greater danger than ever.

To have been assisted even by his advice, would have been a great consolation, the first Lieutenant observed; though he was himself considered as a very experienced Officer, and was much beloved and respected by the crew, who all swore to stand by him to the last drop of their blood.—“Why, the enemy gains very fast upon us, my brave fellows,” he cried; “and to attempt to run in our shattered state, would be truly absurd; we must therefore do the best we can to maintain the honour of the British flag.”

They could now plainly distinguish two French frigates, and a corvette, which was detached to give chase to the merchantmen. The first of the former carried four-and-forty guns, the other thirty-six. Notwithstanding the bravery with which the British prepared for the engagement, and tried to save their convoy, the enemy soon perceived they were not in a fighting condition,
and

and had much rather, had it been practicable, have avoided, than come to action: they were therefore convinced they would become an easy prize. The smallest frigate was the fastest sailer, and gained considerably upon the Prince of Wales, whose crew were making every exertion to defend themselves with true British skill and courage. Her commanding Officer manœuvred with infinite dexterity, and drew the vessel which was foremost in the chase, to as great a distance as possible from her companion, before he came to action, which was at last rendered unavoidable, and a very severe engagement took place, which was maintained with infinite spirit and bravery on both sides for more than half an hour, when the British had the good fortune to carry away the enemy's mizen-mast, having previously done considerable injury to her rigging: and had she been alone, they would have now hoped to have made her strike her colours; but her consort being within half a league, the Commander

I 2 thought

thought it would be most prudent to seize this opportunity to endeavour to make their escape. He therefore gave orders in consequence to the sailing-master, who vainly endeavoured to second his wishes, as the other vessel continued to gain upon them, notwithstanding they had every sail set at all likely to effect the desired end. They had suffered a great deal in the short contest; but every thing was repaired as well as possible during their run, for a second engagement, which they soon foresaw must be the consequence: and much sooner than they wished, their fears were verified, as a very fine new frigate, mounting forty-four guns, dropped along-side of them, and poured her whole broadside into their shattered vessel. They were not backward, however, in returning the salute; but the enemy's second discharge proved fatal to the first Lieutenant, their commanding Officer. A greater misfortune could not scarcely have befallen them, as he was at once brave, cool, and experienced. A sort of gloomy silence

silence prevailed for some seconds, as the buz flew to every part of the ship, and which was only broke by the lamentations of the Officers and crew—the highest eulogium that could be paid to the merits of the deceased. Their grief was, however, soon checked by the second Lieutenant, upon whom the command had now devolved; who, advancing with assumed dignity, and more self-importance, after eyeing the ship from head to stern, and taking a glance at the enemy, very calmly ordered the colours to be struck, as he was not inclined to sacrifice the lives of his men so wantonly as his predecessor would have done.

So unexpected a command occasioned a second momentary silence, and all eyes were instantly turned upon Fortescue, whose surprise could only be equalled by his indignation. Endeavouring to suppress his resentment, he warmly exclaimed, “ You are certainly not in earnest, Lieutenant? The brave friend, whose loss we have such reason to deplore, would not have suffered the
1 3 glory

glory of the British flag to be thus *wantonly* tarnished. Thank God, we are not in that deplorable state !”

“ What, Sir, do you murmur ?” he replied. “ Do you suppose I am ignorant of the situation of our ship ? But as I alone shall be answerable for my own conduct, I desire you would only attend to your own duty ; it is madness to contend with such a superior force, so obey my orders, sailors ! I command you to strike the colours !”

Edward, rendered furious, looked around him, his eyes flashing fire. “ What, my brave fellows——” He paused. Not a man attempted to obey the commander.

Edward’s countenance began to brighten as he looked round him, and waved his sword in the air. The next moment a general shout of “ Old England for ever !” assailed his ears. His joy just then knew no bounds.—“ Put him in irons, my brave fellows !” he exclaimed, “ The death of our late commander has certainly given him
power

power over us, but we will never obey the orders of a coward. Away with him!"

The thunderstruck Lieutenant was instantly seized, and given into charge to the Master at Arms, Fortescue declaring he would abide by the consequence of what he had done, if the crew would but second him. A general and most hearty shout proclaimed their willingness, and several solemn protestations followed, to assure him of their determination to stand by him to the last drop of their blood: others went farther, by declaring it had been their intention to fling the traitor overboard, if he had not been ordered into confinement.

"You are the lads!" cried a very brave youth, though only a Midshipman, but a great friend of Lieutenant Fortescue's;—"three cheers more to our new commander, and then to our duty, for we are losing time; we will shew the enemy what we can do when we set about it in earnest."

The youth had not finished what he wanted to say, before his first request was

complied with, and every man flew to his quarters. No engagement was ever renewed with more hearty goodwill. Edward gave his orders with as much calmness and intrepidity as his beloved Captain, whom he tried to copy, could have done, and whose representative he now considered himself. The thought inspired him with almost more than mortal courage: indeed he was resolved either to conquer or die, sensible, after what he had taken upon himself to do, in direct opposition to the commanding Officer, his hopes of future promotion solely rested upon his success. He had fought the frigate for an hour and forty minutes, when a sailor from below ran upon deck, swearing the ship was sinking!

“It can’t be,” cried Edward; “did you ever hear of a Prince of Wales going to the bottom?”

“I do not remember I ever did, Sir,” was the reply; “but I fear this one will set the example.”

A second

A second messenger soon came to confirm the report of the first.

“Never mind a little water in the hold,” said Edward; but confident of the danger, he immediately called all hands upon deck. Being in the midst of his crew, “My brave fellows,” said he, “you have fought most manfully, but I am sorry to say, not with that success I vainly hoped, though our enemy has suffered very considerably. We have no time for deliberation; the ship is very leaky, and the water gains upon us fast. I have already tasted the sweets of a French prison, and do not scruple to say, I had much rather go to the bottom than ever revisit one. We have yet one chance left, and which I know can be put into practice; desperate diseases, it is said, require desperate remedies: and supposing the Prince of Wales was private property, we should be expected to make good her loss; how much more particular then ought we to be in our present predicament! I see no means of making up the loss the

nation seems likely to sustain, except by ordering the sailing-master to lay us close along-side the enemy, whom we must instantly board. You see it can be done in two minutes, and if you are inclined to follow me, and will do your best, I will ensure you success; for though we are but a handful of men, comparatively speaking, we ought to remember we are all English. Silence, you know, gives consent; only recollect we have no alternative but to get possession of that fine frigate, to strike our colours, or soon go down with them flying. A moment is sufficient to decide;—I chose to consult you—you know my opinion.”

He paused; not a word was uttered, but in a moment every man prepared himself for what they were to undertake.

The enemy were aware of this conference, but had attributed it to a very different motive from the real one; for while they seemed to slacken their efforts, expecting every moment to see the Prince's colours lowered, she was quietly dropping along-side of them:

indeed it was so suddenly done, and so unexpected, that Edward leaped on board the Frenchman, encouraging his brave followers, with very little opposition in the first moment, so much were they taken by surprise; but the contest, owing to their superior numbers, soon became bloody and desperate. The young Lieutenant kept calling upon his men.—“Remember, my lads,” cried he, “for whom, and for what we are fighting—the best of Kings, our country, and our own liberty! Death is preferable to returning home in disgrace! Do not let us afford such a triumph to the man we have put in irons! Death or victory, shall be my motto!”

“And mine, and mine!” he heard repeated around him, while they bore down every thing before them; the brave Tars, with such a leader, appeared invincible.

Edward at last came to close quarters with the French commander, who fell by his hand, and in eight minutes the enemy called for quarter. Fortescue had the

supreme pleasure of striking the French colours with his own hands ; but had no sooner seen his daring enterprise crowned with success, than his dear benefactor darted across his mind, as he heard his men calling out, “ She is going ! ” He instantly jumped on board the sinking ship, ran into the cabin, caught the Captain in his arms, and ran upon deck with him, having merely wrapped him in a blanket, almost unconscious of the burthen he sustained. His men assisted him in getting the invalid on board the prize ; while others, trembling to think of the danger he had thus voluntarily incurred, threw ropes round him, for fear the Prince should go down while he remained upon her deck. He was therefore soon once more on board his prize, and then enquired whether all the crew, but particularly the second Lieutenant, were safe. The latter alone had been forgotten. “ Then I will save his life, or perish in the attempt,” replied the undaunted Edward ; but

but the sailors, one and all, putting themselves in his way, swore he should not expose himself any more for such a cowardly rascal; not that they wished him to be drowned, though it might save him from a less shameful death. However, two of them readily undertook to release him, if possible. One of them succeeded in the attempt, but had not returned half a minute, before the Prince of Wales gradually disappeared from their sight.

Edward had run below to see that every possible care was taken of his best friend, but came again upon deck when he heard the news.

“Ah, Sir, but just in time!” cried one of his sailors, who had brought the first news of their danger; “I told you how it would be; but we have escaped old Davy this once.”

“Never mind, my brave fellows,” exclaimed their commander; “who can regret such a shattered bark when we look here? The Prince of Wales has left her name behind

behind her, for we will make bold to new-christen the *Mutius Scævola*, leaving it to the Lords of the Admiralty to reverse, or affirm our decree:—so, for the present, this is the Prince of Wales, Boatswain, and may old England never be in possession of a worse ship, which you, my lads, through your bravery and good conduct, have put in the place of the one we have lost. By and by we will have a jovial christening; for we have not only escaped a watery death, but also a French prison.”

The crew, scarcely less inspirited than the young hero, gave him three loud and long cheers; then said, “they must see if the *Mounseers* had got any good liquors on board; fighting was dry work; besides, they were anxious to drink his health, and to the recovery of their noble Captain.”

The situation of that best of men, who still remained insensible, alone damped the spirits of Fortescue; but they had scarcely been a quarter of an hour in possession of the *Mutius Scævola*, during which time every

one

one had been too busy to think of keeping any look-out, before they perceived the other frigate, having set up a jury-mast, was crowding sail to come to the assistance of her consort.

Edward was providing, as well as he was able, for the comfort and convenience of his friend, when this fresh piece of intelligence was brought him. He instantly went upon deck, and perceiving what their intentions were, said, "I think she could not have come in better time to increase our wreath of glory; at least I never was in better spirits to give her a similar drubbing to that we have bestowed upon her companion; and I hope she is so friendly, that rather than part, she will attend us to Portsmouth."

"That's hearty by G—d!" cried a sailor, standing near; "I will do my best; I think I have done half a dozen of them already, and it is a long time to sunset."

Edward smiled, and desired to know how many hands they could muster.

"Just

“ Just about half enough for our present number of guns,” replied the young Midshipman before mentioned; “ and that is quite sufficient, when they are worked by Englishmen, to make the insolent fellows soon lower their colours. I am only afraid they will shear off !”

“ Bravely said, my young friend,” replied Edward; “ but see immediately that all the prisoners are well secured below, and enquire what men are under the surgeon’s hands, and who are yet fit for duty ; for no one, I am convinced, who can move, or be of the least service, will wish to lose the honour of sharing our glory.”

The Lieutenant who had actually been put in irons, but who had been liberated to facilitate his getting on board the *Mutius Scaevola*, said, rather humbly, “ he was very willing to do the duty even of a sailor in time of such need. He found he had been greatly deceived respecting the strength of their late ship, but still he
thought

thought they owed their success more to rashness, than real courage."

"It is very immaterial to me, Sir," replied Edward, "what you think of my conduct; facts, when you come upon your trial, will speak for themselves; you would have surrendered—I have gained a ship for his Majesty in the room of the one we have lost, and I think we have given proofs that the Prince of Wales was not in that deplorable state you seemed to think her;—you are therefore at liberty to take an active part, or not, in the approaching engagement, provided you chuse to conform to my orders; for I shall not resign my command till my brave Captain recovers, or we reach Portsmouth."

"Mighty well, Sir; the time may come when you may repent having made use of such language."

The young Midshipman, mentioned more than once before, and who had distinguished himself so as to receive the most particular thanks of Fortescue when the contest ended, overheard

overheard the short dispute. Actuated by the love he bore the one, and the contempt in which he held the other, he hastily stepped forward, saying—

“ Pray, Sir, allow me to take this troublesome gentleman away once more. We shall have no luck while he is upon deck ; I know he only hopes to share our glory ; remember, Sir, what an effect one scabby sheep has been known to have upon the whole flock. In the cockpit he will be safe, and may be of use. - I have already a secret dread we shan’t be equally successful.”

“ Insolent puppy !” cried the enraged coward, making a step towards him.

“ I approve of your advice, my young friend,” said Edward ; “ take him below ; for, as you say, if Fortune should prove unfavourable, I shall be, like you, tempted to place her fickleness to his account ; so e’en put him among the French prisoners.”

“ An excellent birth !” cried the undaunted youth ; “ come along, Sir !”

“ Very

“ Very well, young gentleman ; only remember who it is you are so anxious to lay your hands upon.”

“ Be thankful I do not lay something harder upon you,” he replied. But there is no time for debate ;” when he fairly dragged him away, saying, “ Reserve all your eloquence for the day of trial.”

The enemy, who were now within random shot, soon perceived who were masters of the *Mutius Scævola* ; and convinced she must be very badly manned, thought only of rescuing her out of the hands of the conquerors.

Edward was not quite so well prepared for their reception as he would have wished ; he therefore made sail to gain time, which greatly encouraged the French, who supposed the actions they had sustained with both frigates, and the boarding at last, must have cost them a great number of men, admitting none had gone down in their former ship. Their own vessel was remarkably well manned and appointed.

While

While Fortescue was giving the necessary orders, one of the crew came to inform him they had, in securing their prisoners, found fifteen countrymen crammed into a d——d hole below, who all swore they longed to repay the Frenchmen's politeness, for they were not so pressed for room, to have made it necessary to stifle them."

"I rejoice at what you tell me," said Edward. "Poor fellows! we were in great need of such a reinforcement, and I am not quite so tenacious of glory as our Fifth Henry, who did not even wish for another man on St. Crispin's day to share his honours."

The liberated prisoners soon appeared upon deck, and proved to be the crew of a British merchantman which the frigate had captured only the day before. They immediately went to work with great cheerfulness, protesting nothing would afford them so much pleasure as to be able to give the *Mounseers* a good drubbing. They related their anxiety, hopes, and fears during the engagement,

engagement, and the pleasure they felt when some of the broadsides made them fancy she could not stand many more.

Having taken all the precautions circumstances would admit, the enemy were allowed to come along-side. To be thus fought in a manner with their own weapons, enraged the Frenchmen almost to madness, which only served to render their success more doubtful; while Fortescue and his companions displayed the same cool heroic intrepidity, which had hitherto rendered them victorious.

“ I hope we shall have a second christening,” exclaimed the young Midshipman, who was as active as ever, upon seeing the jury-mast of the enemy, which, in their haste to come to the assistance of their consort, they had not properly secured, rendered useless.

It was now at Fortescue's option either to fight or run away. He soon decided to do the former; and being most ably, willingly, and even skilfully seconded, he had the
good

good fortune, at the expiration of two hours and ten minutes, to see them strike their colours. * This was such a triumph, that the crew were almost as mad with joy as the enemy had been a little while before with rage. They danced about the decks, they hugged each other, they cheered their commander; in short, committed the greatest extravagances for several minutes, and seemed to think themselves invincible: while Edward was rather embarrassed what to do with his prize, being so short of men, and they all very much fatigued, besides having lost some, and many others being wounded. However, something must be decided upon, and it would not be prudent that the enemy should know their real distressed situation. He therefore, in the first place, gave orders to have plenty of the best liquor that could be found on board, distributed among his brave crew. He then walked among them, took every individual by the hand, and assured them

he

he would represent their bravery in the strongest terms to the Lords of the Admiralty; they might therefore depend upon their gallant conduct being amply rewarded, not to mention the prize-money to which they were entitled. He then represented to them that the short number of hands obliged him to impose a very hard duty upon them for a short time. They answered, that they neither wanted sleep nor rest—in short, were ready to undertake any thing in the height of their joy; while some of them swore their commander might rest assured they should not get groggy with what Frenchmen were obliged to live upon; it was only wonderful the poor fellows stood it as they had done.

Edward then nearly dividing his crew, sent those men he could most depend upon, on board the prize—the rest he had under his own eyes; and it was with no small degree of satisfaction he reflected, that he was within a very few days' sail of
England,

England, and only hoped to reach a British port without meeting with any more of the enemy's ships; though their respectable appearance would deter any small craft from approaching them, and it would be truly mortifying to lose laurels so bravely won.

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CHAP. XI.

HAVING made his first arrangements, while the frigates were laying to, to repair their rigging, &c. Edward saw that every care was taken of the sick and wounded, particularly of his beloved Captain, for the recovery of whose reason he was now doubly anxious; conscious, were he to have the misfortune to lose him, which he prayed Heaven to avert, the amiable man would have a satisfaction, even in his last moments, upon hearing that the British flag had been victorious. Having done all that was necessary, such as giving every requisite order respecting what repair was first to

be made; and having strictly examined the security of the prisoners, whose number rendered such precautions doubly needful, about midnight, worn out with fatigue, he thought he would lay down, and try to compose himself for a few hours; therefore had a mattress placed near the Captain's bed for that purpose, upon which he stretched himself. But notwithstanding the fatigue he had undergone, he had a constant dread upon his mind that his small number of hands, being all equally fatigued, might be overcome for want of rest; while plots and contrivances were undoubtedly forming among such a number of enemies, already clamorous, and demanding more air, which the young Lieutenant dared not grant them:—indeed, some little punishment was their due, he told them, desiring them to remember how they had treated his countrymen, when their captives, without the same reason. By day he promised to allow them more indulgence, and to take the air by turns. Full of the most alarming fears,

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fears, he at last forgot himself, but frequently started up, and as often laid himself down again when he found all was safe.

The surgeon, scarcely less fatigued than himself, being also accustomed to spend his nights near the Captain, sat nodding very comfortably in a large French chair, not participating in Edward's reasonable fears, who was most agreeably surprised, soon after daybreak, upon opening his eyes, to hear himself called by the well-known voice of his beloved benefactor. Starting upon his legs, for he had lain down in his clothes, he flew to his bed-side.

"Where am I, Edward?" enquired the Captain; "surely I am awake! I have been looking about me for some time;—I know my head has been strangely deranged, but I am certainly now in my senses!"

"Yes, Heavens be praised, my best and dearest friend!" replied the agitated Fortescue, seizing his hand. "How welcome was the sound of your voice! Compose yourself, my dear Sir, and I trust you will soon

recover to enjoy our good fortune ; this is the happiest moment I have known these ten days."

" Good God ! have I been ill so long ? But I am no stranger to the affection you bear me, my beloved Edward ; I have been watching your uneasy slumbers, and trying to recollect myself ; I hope I shall recover for your sake. I think I am rather better ; I seem as if I had awoke from an odd kind of dream. You don't look well, I think ; your constant attendance upon me has hurt your own health. But pray satisfy my anxious curiosity ; methinks I have heard nothing but the roaring of cannon ever since I have been ill. I suppose it was merely the effect of a confused brain ; yet when I look round me, I am at a loss ; still I could not bear the idea of waking you. But what has happened ? Your frequent starts in your sleep alarmed me. I fear we are prisoners, yet I see you armed. But surely my eyes deceive me very strangely, if this is the Prince of Wales."

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"These are truly proofs of returning reason, my beloved benefactor; this is not the Prince of Wales; it is nevertheless your ship."

Tears of joy chased each other down his cheeks, while he smilingly continued, "You alone now command here, though we are not on board the frigate in which we left England: but I trust you will find this a still finer vessel; she carries forty-four guns, and we have been in possession of her since yesterday."

"I can't at all comprehend you, my dear fellow. In the name of Heaven, what has happened in the ten days you say I have been ill? I can't rest till I am fully satisfied."

Edward therefore briefly recounted every thing that had occurred during the preceding day, hoping, he told him, he had not done wrong, situated as he was, in ordering a superior Officer into irons, particularly when supported by the whole ship's crew."

- "Wrong! my beloved boy, you have acted nobly, and as I should have wished a son of mine to have done. What have my sufferings been to the pleasure I now feel!" wiping his eyes while he gazed upon the noble youth. Then pressing the hand he held, he fervently exclaimed, "What would I at this moment give if you were indeed my son! You have made me too happy, indeed Edward you have. I foresaw you would do me honour, and you have more than realized my most sanguine expectations. Poor Arbuthnot! Well, he died a glorious death! He was a brave, generous fellow, and it would have been better we had all shared his fate, than have struck our colours. Come to my arms, my dear fellow! your intelligence has done me more good than any medicines our surgeon could have ordered me. You will now return to England Commodore, my brave Fortescue; for I would not, if I was able, rob you of any of the honours you have so gloriously won: so continue to give your orders without consulting

consulting me, as I am certain I shall approve of every thing you think right. As for that dastardly Graham, he shall be brought to a court-martial the moment we reach Portsmouth; and the least he has to expect, is to be cashiered, and rendered incapable of serving his King or country, which Nature has done already, a cowardly scoundrel! while you, to make use of our enemy's phrase to their warriors, "have deserved well of your country."

The surgeon awoke while the Captain was thus expressing his joy, and declared his satisfaction to find him so much better than he had dared to have expected, considering the noise, hurry, and confusion of the day before; and having felt his pulse, he declared he began to entertain great hopes he would do very well, advising him to take a composing draught which he went to prepare, while Edward ascended the deck in excellent spirits, having offered up a most fervent thanksgiving to the throne of Mercy for

his late brilliant victory, and the restoration of his beloved friend's senses.

The French Officers were of course upon their parole, and did ample justice to the bravery, skill, and politeness of the youth, to whom they had surrendered their swords, declaring, that since they were to be taken, they rejoiced at having fallen into the hands of a hero; while the surgeon was warmly expatiating to the Captain upon the conduct and undaunted resolution his now idolized *élève* had displayed; not forgetting his having, at the most imminent risk of his own life, brought him on board in his arms, nor how carefully he had watched over him every moment he could spare from his professional duty.

The generous Bloomfield frequently shed tears of joy, and only hoped he should live to see such merit and bravery rewarded as they deserved.

About noon, both ships having been put into as good order as the shortness of the time, and the want of hands would allow,

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Edward made the signal for sailing. They saw no more of the vessels under their convoy, but had the satisfaction to find all but one safe in port when they reached Plymouth, where the Captain thought it most prudent to take the prizes.

The joy their arrival occasioned, may be more easily conceived than described; as the manner of their having been taken, and the age of the conqueror, gave additional lustre to the victory.

Captain Bloomfield had rapidly mended from the moment he recovered his reason, and was able to rise, though not to travel, when they arrived in port. He therefore immediately went on shore with the young hero, and landed amidst the loudest acclamations of thousands of spectators. Edward immediately set out for London in a post-chaise and four, to deliver as long a letter as the Captain's weak state would permit him to write to the Secretary of the Admiralty, who was referred to the bearer for further particulars, whose conduct he

had not failed to represent as it deserved, to the person he addressed.

Without stopping, except to take a little necessary refreshment, and change horses, Edward pursued his journey, and arrived in London about noon on Easter Monday, which fell particularly late. He had never once thought about the day till he reached Whitehall, and was introduced to the Secretary, who told him that, by mere accident, it being so great a holiday, some of the Lords were assembled upon particular business; to whom he immediately led the young sailor, informing them he was the bearer of the letter he presented for their perusal.

Most sincere and flattering were the congratulations he received, after they had read the letter, and he had told his story, which he did in a very few words, and with infinite modesty, observing, "the victory he had obtained was greatly owing to the exertions of his men, who seemed to vie with each other to deserve praise."

"None

“None of your brave fellows, then, shall go unrewarded,” replied one of the Noblemen present; “and your preferment, Mr. Fortescue, shall be our first care, as I am convinced you will continue to deserve the reputation you have so early obtained. You acted perfectly right respecting Lieutenant Graham, for whose trial we shall send down immediate orders: for, anxious as we are to reward merit, we are not less so to punish cowardice and disaffection.

Edward was now permitted to retire, having received orders to attend the Board the following morning, who lost no time in disseminating such glorious news, which was even thought worthy an extraordinary Gazette. Our hero, meanwhile, walked down to Crutched Friars, to deliver a few lines from his benefactor to his brother, intended to tranquillize the merchant's mind, and to recommend his young friend more than ever to his notice and protection. Conscious his unexpected return without the Captain might greatly alarm Mr. Bloomfield,

field, he was half inclined to send a note from a neighbouring coffee-house to his friend William; but upon second thoughts, he determined to proceed into the Friars. A servant, whom he did not know, opened the door—rather a fortunate circumstance, he considered. He enquired for Mr. William Bloomfield, and was informed, he was at home, but was dressing for the annual dinner at the Mansion-House. Edward knew there was no need of ceremony; therefore told the servant to lead the way to his young master's room, to whom he should announce himself.

The moment William heard the well-known voice, he started from his seat (he was having his hair dressed), and caught Fortescue in his arms, whom he completely covered with powder, declaring he was overjoyed to see him, and anxiously enquired after his uncle.

“He is, thank Heaven! recovering very fast from a dangerous fit of illness,” he replied, “and has given me a letter for your father;

father; but when I learned at the Admiralty that this was Easter Monday, I was more than half inclined to have postponed my visit till to-morrow; only I was fearful, as I am fortunately the herald of most joyful tidings, you might learn my arrival in London from some indifferent person, which would alarm you more than hearing the truth at once, as I solemnly assure you, your uncle is absolutely out of danger. You must now determine whether you had better deliver his letter to your father immediately, or keep it in your possession till to-morrow; for, even favourable as my account is, to what I once dreaded it would have been, it may prevent his entering into the spirit of the feast with as much glee as he would otherwise have done."

"Upon my honour, my dear cautious friend, I am at a loss how to act; for my father has been in great hopes that my uncle would have returned in time to have accompanied him to the Mansion House, where
he

he must attend himself; for, whether you know it or not, he is one of the Sheriffs."

"Then I really think you had better not let him have the letter before to-morrow morning; and should he learn the success of our arms during the day, I trust our reason for wishing to keep him in ignorance for a short time, will plead our excuse. I will dine at some tavern in the neighbourhood of the Mansion-House, where you can send for me, should he wish to hear the particulars of his brother's illness, or any thing else concerning him, he may be anxious to learn."

"It shall be as you say, my dear Edward; but now pray enter into a few details respecting the joyful tidings you have brought to the Admiralty."

Fortescue complied with his request, and William wondered he had ever consented to be immured in a counting-house, instead of entering the sea service, protesting his friend had only realized the expectations he had formed; "for I was convinced," he

con-

continued, "what man dared do, you would do. I only wish you had returned to England a month sooner, as I have ever hoped to have one hero in the family; and I am sure my notions would have met the approbation of my uncle."

"For Heaven's sake, what are you talking about?" gaily interrupted Edward.

"Why, I was talking reason, which I don't do often; though this is not the first time the same idea has come across me. I have a sister, you know, though you never saw her; and a very handsome lass she is, my dear friend, take that upon the word of her brother. She has been tormented with a succession of lovers, or admirers, for these last three years, though she is not yet twenty. But hitherto she has not been addressed by any man whom she has thought proper to distinguish from the common herd; or any one that my wise father, who, between ourselves, is rather particular, would have approved of for a son-in-law. But a very smart City fop, or buck,

buck, or whatever you please, has lately increased the number of her swains, with the Sheriff's full consent and approbation, though not with mine, believe me; for I do not like the man, who is to be at the ball this evening, because, being an excellent dancer, he hopes to make more impression upon her heart by his graceful capers, than he has hitherto been able to do by his fine speeches. 'Tis the veriest little dapper beau you ever beheld, not being near so tall as your humble servant, who has not an inch to spare. But this young gentleman is reputed to be immensely rich, and very good tempered—two great recommendations in the eyes of my father: but what some people call good temper, others will deem weakness in a man. Now I have always understood that a clever lively girl prefers what you, as a sailor, would call a fellow with some spunk: for even these milkops are sometimes tyrants; and if a woman must submit, why, in their place, I would never give up but to

a man of real courage ; and after all, I am firmly of opinion they make the best husbands."

" I am really not competent to argue these points," replied Edward, with a smile ; " riches are generally considered as a very essential article by all provident fathers, and certainly good temper is equally essential to ensure felicity in the married state ; therefore, as her lover is amply provided with both these requisites, I trust your sister will be as happy as I am convinced she deserves, should she accept the gentleman you describe."

" Which I sincerely hope she never will," replied William. " I have frequently heard her launch forth in praise of heroes, and admire the exploits of brave, particularly handsome men ; for in an ordinary ill-favoured being, it seems in their nature to be courageous. Indeed I have frequently been amused with her arguments when she has been in these strains ; and I don't fail
now

now and then to give her a hint how much I dislike her present admirer, who has little else but money to recommend him: whereas, you appear to be exactly the man she has so often described."

"Have you been lately studying the art of flattery?" interrupted the laughing Edward.

"No, upon my soul, I was speaking my thoughts; and your having mentioned your late glorious achievement, revived the idea. You are much flouter and taller than when we parted: indeed, in your place, I should not wish to be half an inch higher; but perhaps you have done growing."

"I rather suppose I have," replied Edward, "for I am between two and three-and-twenty."

"Ah, then you have come to a stand; and it is time you did, for you are six feet I dare say, already."

"Not by an inch," replied Fortescue, laughing still more; "and I am sure you looked that inch taller when I entered the room."

room. Do pray look at your head, and make haste and dress, or you will be too late. I dare say there are some ladies taking a vast deal of pains to appear amiable in your eyes to-day."

"Very possibly," sighed William; "but my heart is deeply engaged, though the dear girl who has stolen it, is not conscious of the robbery she has committed; nor dare I sue for her's in return, till I am better acquainted with her family and fortune. My father will require chapter and verse upon those articles whenever I mention the word matrimony, though I know he longs to see me shackled;—indeed he has ever been an advocate for early marriage, and often reminds me that I am three-and-twenty, which I should positively like to be till the day of my death; and I would not scruple sacrificing ten years of my life to ensure such a blessing."

"What a pity you cannot purchase the elixir of life!—You could dispense with the philosopher's stone; but then you must be able

able to communicate your secret to the lady of your choice ; perhaps you would not chuse she should ever exceed eighteen!"

" Why, that is old enough for a woman; but then she must be a model of prudence, which I could not bear."

" I wish you would bear to finish dressing," interrupted Edward ; " I hope the object of your adoration is to be either at the dinner or ball."

" I am afraid not. I only wish you could be there. I could easily procure you a ticket, if it was not necessary to keep my father in ignorance of your arrival."

" You are very kind ; but even admitting we had no reasons for keeping our meeting a secret, I had much rather be excused making my appearance at the ball. But as I fear you will not finish your toilet while I remain in your room, I shall take my leave of you for the present, as I have several places to call at in the City. I shall dine, and probably spend the evening at the — Coffee-house, where, should
you

you have any thing to say to me, you will find me from five o'clock."

"But why not dine where you are? I will take care you shall not starve. Old dame Collins is alive, and will do her best, I will be bound."

"You are very obliging; but situated as I am at present, I had rather be excused. I am happy to hear my old friend, the house-keeper, is well. I will pay you an early visit to-morrow, if I neither see nor hear from you this evening."

"How ceremonious you are grown! However, depend upon this, the moment my father hears you are in town, he will insist upon your taking up your abode in Crutched Friars. Hark! that is him just drove from the door. I wish you could have seen what a dash he cuts; though he is by no means fond of shew, yet he is anxious to do honour to his *exalted* situation: still he would have thought it vanity to have had his state carriage come to the door a moment before he was ready to step into

into it. My mother and sister, I suppose, are gone with him; for you must know he allows me to sport a chariot of my own; so I am not tied to their time, or I should have been summoned long since. However, my dear friend, since you do not chuse to become an inmate of this house unknown to my father, depend upon either seeing or hearing from me before ten o'clock this evening."

Thus the friends parted: Edward took the opportunity to deliver some other letters, and William proceeded to the Mansion-House.

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CHAP. XII.

FAME was meanwhile busily employed in circulating the heroic deeds of the young Naval hero. A letter had been dispatched, giving an account of his brilliant achievements, and the glorious victory he had obtained, by the Admiralty Board, to the Lord Mayor, which was put into his Lordship's hands just after the ladies had left the dinner tables. He read it aloud to the company, requesting they would join him in a bumper glass to the health of Lieutenant Fortescue, the worthy pupil of that celebrated circumnavigator, Captain John Bloomfield.

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The Sheriff's astonishment may be easily conceived, as he understood, from the letter he had heard read, his brother lay dangerously ill at the time young Fortescue fought his vessel. Excessively alarmed, he hastily enquired who had brought the news of this important victory to the Admiralty?

"The hero himself," he was immediately informed.

"What then could have prevented him from coming into Crutched Friars? What time had the news been brought to town?"

His curiosity being gratified, the Sheriff concluded Fortescue had been at his house after he left home, and determined to send immediately to enquire; but while the room was ringing with three times three, in honour of Edward, to his increasing wonder, the young hero made his appearance with his friend William, who led him towards his father, explaining why they had agreed, and wished to have kept his arrival in town a secret till the next day. Then turning to the Lord Mayor, he introduced his friend as the

Lieutenant

Lieutenant Fortescue, to whom Great-Britain was so greatly indebted.

The young man's behaviour was highly applauded; but to repeat the compliments which now assailed him from all sides, would appear tedious: suffice it to say, never was modest merit more honoured. His health was again drank with additions, and with the same plaudits, nor was his brave Captain forgotten; and every gentleman present, who could get near enough, would shake hands with so brave a defender of their country's cause. At last he was requested to take his seat next the Sheriff, who, convinced his brother was out of all danger, was, like him, rejoiced that his adopted son had proved himself worthy of his former kindness; for the Sheriff had none of that mean jealousy so prevalent among mankind: he was therefore sincere in his congratulations; and the compliments being over, the bottles went briskly round. In a short time, owing to so flattering a reception, Edward was quite at his ease, and was not

sorry he had, in a great measure, been obliged to join this jovial loyal set, some of whom were very reluctant to adjourn into the ball-room.

Edward would have retired, but both the Lord Mayor and Sheriff Bloomfield overruled every objection he made, saying the City ladies would be highly offended if he did not allow them to congratulate him upon his late exploits. His uniform might not be quite so smart as if he had remained inactive at home; but it was the more likely, for that very reason, to procure him a favourable reception from his fair countrywomen, who knew how to appreciate and esteem such zeal, loyalty, and bravery as he had displayed in the service of his country; and he was therefore in a manner obliged to attend the gentlemen who were inclined to dance, into the Egyptian Hall, where he was first presented to the Lady Mayoress, then to several other ladies in rotation, and finally to Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield, whom he had never before seen; when, to
his

his infinite astonishment, and no small pleasure, he recognized in the latter the female Samaritan who had saved him from perishing under Alderman Bulford's hedge!—the lovely Maria, whose purse he had ever considered as a sacred relic, and whose features were too deeply engraven upon his mind, ever to escape his memory. Nor was Maria's more treacherous; notwithstanding the amazing alteration he had undergone, she recognized the youth she had so charitably rescued from perhaps certain death, and whom she had often wished chance would again throw in her way.

Her evident confusion, and heightened colour, did not escape the notice of her father, who said, "I thought you had never seen my daughter before, Lieutenant; but I begin to fancy I was mistaken."

"I was not conscious I had ever had that honour, Sir, till you introduced me to Miss Bloomfield, whom I very unintentionally frightened some years ago," repeating every thing that had occurred from the

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moment

moment of his first beholding her getting over Alderman Bulford's stile, to their being joined by that gentleman and his daughter, adding, "Thus you find, Sir, this young lady's benevolence enabled me to procure a night's lodging, and some wholesome food; I may therefore safely assert, she was the preserver of my life; and I need not add how rejoiced I am to recognize my kind benefactress in the niece of my honoured patron!"

This explanation perfectly satisfied Mr. and Mrs. Bloomfield; but Maria's agitation rather increased than diminished, though she did all in her power to appear unconcerned, declaring the Lieutenant had as great a right to place her present to the score of her fear as her benevolence, as she scarcely knew what she was about at the time he mentioned; but was very happy that chance had put it into her power to do him any service."

Just then who should advance but Alderman Bulford and his daughter!

"So,

"So, Miss Bloomfield," said the former, "you look quite charming to-night;" while his daughter enquired, in an audible whisper, "What charming man is that you were speaking to, Maria?"

"The vile wretch whom you thought had murdered me a little time since! It is a fact upon my honour!" she continued, trying to appear gay, and rather enjoying her less feeling friend's mortification.

While this explanation was taking place between the two young ladies, the Alderman was questioning the Sheriff, who nearly repeated what Edward had told.

"Why, z——s!" exclaimed Bulford, who was nearly tipsy, "I remember something of a strange fright I had about your daughter; aye, I offered the young fellow six-pence, which he refused to take."

"Nevertheless, Sir, your kindness has ever been remembered," said Edward, looking him full in the face while speaking.

The Alderman had just sense enough to look confused, and his daughter used her fan with some violence, the room being so warm. But Miss Bloomfield's admirer appearing, which was rather *apropos*, to claim her hand, and lead her away to join the dancers, whether it was owing to her late surprise or confusion, or to any other cause, certain it is, Maria never danced so ill, or less to her own satisfaction,

Edward remained a spectator, absolutely refusing to join the festive set ;—but Maria frequently caught his eyes upon her, which perhaps confused, and put her out.

Between two and three the Sheriff's family returned home, accompanied by Fortescue, as neither Mr. or Mrs. Bloomfield would hear of his taking up his abode any where but in Crutched Friars, where he was put in possession of an excellent apartment, which he was desired to consider as his own while he remained in London.

Neither Maria nor our hero slept much, though each endeavoured to banish the
other

other from their mind ;—yet they were not in love ; but there was a something pleasing in the recollection of their first meeting. Edward's heart bounded with gratitude towards the lovely girl ; and Maria was flattered at her own discernment. The young man had not only proved himself far above the common rank at the time she had relieved his necessities, but had turned out truly a hero ; and she had ever declared her partiality in favour of such men. She sighed when she reflected that she was in a great measure engaged to another ; and was well assured, if that had not been the case, her father would never consent to her disposing of her hand in favour of a sailor of fortune. Edward had heard enough of the Sheriff's disposition, to convince him that martial deeds alone would not secure his favour, and as yet he was not inclined to elucidate the mystery that hung over his birth and future expectations ; besides, these were not times for sailors to think of love affairs. Yet Maria was a most lovely girl ;

girl; and he had been told by her brother that the beauties of her mind were more than equal to those of her person. Such qualities united, were seldom to be met with now-a-days; and such a companion for life, he thought, would greatly contribute to the felicity of a sensible, feeling man. She seemed totally free from pride and affectation, from what he had observed, and what he had been told; he therefore agreed within himself, he felt a preference for her on that account, for he could not be in love with a woman he had scarcely seen:—besides, that passion never existed without hope, and he had only reason to despair. He therefore soon resolved to think no more of Maria Bloomfield, or any of her sex. Glory, it had been said, ought to be a soldier's prevalent passion! Then why not a sailor's? And what man was more enamoured of her than himself?—He had certainly often wished to see the fair female Samaritan again, and his curiosity had been very unexpectedly gratified: she was a Bloomfield, therefore

therefore he was, upon reflection, the less astonished at her benevolence ! He would therefore respect the niece of his beloved benefactor, and his own guardian angel ; and forgot himself in the very act of resolving to forget the lovely Maria : who, on her side, thought she had never seen a man, in every respect, so exactly to her mind. How little had she expected to see the youth she had so charitably relieved, in the brave Fortescue ; who, in so short a period, was ranked among the heroes of Great-Britain, and was the beloved *protégé* of her dear uncle, whose life he had certainly saved at the imminent hazard of his own ! Such was the phrase her uncle made use of in his short letter, which she had read. He certainly was as humane as he was brave. The more she reflected, the more she feared to scrutinize the state of her heart ; and rose at a late hour to join the family at breakfast, where she again met Edward Fortescue, who paid her his compliments as to an old acquaintance. Never

was she less at her ease, yet happy, somehow, in his company; but to add to her embarrassment, just as he was rising to take his leave, having appointed to be at the Admiralty at one o'clock (Mrs. Bloomfield having left the room, after reminding him that five o'clock was their dinner hour), who should appear but her Liliputian admirer, who was a nephew of Alderman Bulford's, and a man of the first request on the eastern side of Temple Bar.

The Sheriff had not attended at breakfast, being busy in his counting-house; and William had retired the moment he finished his meal.

Mr. Downing looked rather surprised upon finding the lady of his choice *tête-à-tête* with this handsome celebrated young Officer, and fancied he perceived he was not a very welcome visiter. He certainly hastened Edward's departure.

"You will not forget your dinner engagement, Mr. Fortescue?" said Maria, as he was leaving the room.

Seldom

Seldom more flattered, he assured her he was not so much his own enemy; and could not help thinking, as he sauntered towards Whitehall, it was a thousand pities so fine a girl should fall to the share of such an apology for a man; though without entertaining (we will not say the most distant wish, but) the most distant hope of supplanting him in her's, or rather her father's good graces. Indeed, Mr. Downing could not have presented himself more *mal-a-propos*, as Maria could not avoid making comparisons, which were certainly not in his favour. She therefore suffered him to expend his breath in the usual routine of compliments and enquiries, merely replying, yes or no, as either was required, till the return of her mother, who was even more anxious to promote this match than her husband, though we must own, with the best intentions in the world, for she considered riches as the only true source of happiness;—she wished to render her daughter's felicity permanent; and that

she should prefer such a man as Fortescue, of obscure origin, and no other fortune but his pay, to the rich Isaac Downing, Merchant, of Five Foot Lane, never entered her imagination. She therefore invited the latter to dinner, telling him he would meet the brave young sailor who had gained such an advantage over the enemies of Great-Britain, and was consequently particularly deserving of encouragement from the mercantile part of the community."

"Is he a man of family?" coolly asked the (in his own, as well as in some other people's estimation) great man; "for I presume he is not very rich, if one may judge from his external appearance: however, he has certainly been very fortunate, for had Captain Bloomfield been in good health, the honours would have fallen to his share; but since the French rascals have been beat, it matters not by whom. But I never heard you mention the young man before, Mrs. Bloomfield; it is in consequence

consequence of his good fortune, I presume, that the Captain has particularly recommended him to your notice?"

"I never saw him before yesterday," replied the matron; "and as for his family, I know no more about it than you do, though he has been at our house before. My brother-in-law met with him very accidentally, and took a great liking to him. He went round the world with him; and, in short, is a very great favourite of his, as well as my son William's;—but his long absence, and not having seen him, will account for my not mentioning his name to you. The Captain bestows very great praise upon him in his yesterday's letter; therefore, as my husband says, while he continues to deserve it, he shall always meet with a welcome in Crutched Friars."

"Oh dear Ma'am, I did not mean to be inquisitive; I commend your hospitable spirit, and trust the young fellow will be promoted. He has been remarkably fortunate, as I said before, and I think him still
more

more so, in having made himself an interest in your favour; though there are people who do not scruple to attribute his late victory more to his rashness, than to his courage or skill. Had he failed, he would, with justice, have been severely condemned; but having succeeded, Fame's brazen trumpet is busily employed in exaggerating his merit. When a person has nothing to lose, and every thing to gain, a dangerous attempt is sometimes commendable. I dare say the next thing we shall hear, will be his having received some mark of the Royal favour; for so the wheel of Fortune goes round, my dear Ma'am. Some people are nothing to-day, and great to-morrow."

The young gentleman's kind intentions did not escape Maria's notice, as he looked at her with a smile of self-importance, as if expecting his eloquence would meet her approbation; but she honoured him with a glance he could not misconstrue, while she observed, "superior merit was sure to create envy. Without pretending to make any definitions

definitions between undaunted courage, and that sort of rashness which frequently led even cowards to perform wonders, she had the highest opinion of her uncle's discernment:—he had applauded what his Lieutenant had done, and would rejoice to hear that his merit and bravery had been properly rewarded; for what encouragement would there be for the national defenders, if such an exploit was passed over in silence?" leaving the room as she ceased speaking.

The young gentleman, finding she did not return, soon took his leave, very much disappointed at having so totally failed in his attempt to lower the brave sailor in her esteem.

Mrs. Bloomfield, without any shining qualities, was a most excellent woman. Her husband she considered as one of the first of human beings, and her children she almost idolized. Whatever either of them said, was sure to meet her approbation, though she was frequently at a loss to

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guess their meaning. But they had both received so excellent an education, and were so much admired and courted, that she would have considered it almost a crime to contradict them.

When Maria found time for reflection, she was by no means so well satisfied with herself, as she had been in the first moment of her warmth. She guessed the construction that might be put upon what she had said, by her lover, though he would not dare openly to vent his spleen;—but she could easily persuade her mother. It was her uncle's conduct, much more than the Lieutenant's, she had endeavoured to defend: while her own bosom told her that her warmth arose from something more than esteem for the latter, as she had never before disliked, though she had never admired Mr. Downing. But she now felt something little short of aversion for a man, who could be guilty of such low subterfuges, to tarnish the fame of his superior in every respect but fortune. Still, as he had been particularly

particularly recommended to her notice both by her father and mother, without making any positive objection, she had endeavoured to discover his great merits, which she was now convinced centered wholly in his riches.—Would this young Lieutenant never let his friends know who he really was? What mistaken notion could induce him to conceal his birth, and thus afford his enemies a plea to suppose him of mean origin, or the natural son of her worthy uncle? for such she knew was the general idea among the Captain's own acquaintance. However, whatever his birth might be, he had proved himself worthy the esteem of every generous mind; and she found, if she was not permitted to love, she must ever esteem the amiable youth who had been so often the subject of her uncle's letters.

Full of these reflections, and not satisfied with herself, nor knowing who to blame, she thought of forming a resolution never to marry at all. She was not ambitious; why therefore bestow her hand upon a man whom
her

her heart did not approve?—No, she never could bear the thoughts of becoming the wife of Downing. As she knew neither of her parents would do more than point out the great advantage of such an alliance, (though they would both object to her making what they would deem a very imprudent choice), yet, to be allowed even a negative in such a case, she considered one of the greatest favours they could grant; and having gained tolerable composure, she joined her mother.

Having had plenty of time to compose herself, and arrange her ideas, at dinner Maria affected unusual spirits. She was dressed very simply, while Mr. Downing was adorned for conquest in the very height of the reigning mode, and more than ever tried to display his superior talents and riches, hoping to awe the young sailor into insignificance, and make him sensible of his great inferiority.

William, in reality, much more the man of fashion than the rich Turkey merchant,
chiefly

chiefly addressed his discourse to his friend Edward, who had, by his advice, that very morning parted with a good deal of his fine dark brown hair, in compliance with the fashion, and was therefore, though very unknowingly, much the most tonish figure of the three, as he had never worn powder, and his natural curls were perfectly adapted to the present style of dress.

During dinner, Downing, who could not forbear falling into the very same fault that had so much lowered him in Maria's esteem in the morning, in hopes, perhaps, of being supported, obliquely hinted that neither birth nor riches were requisite to entitle a man to general respect. The French equalizing system was certainly very flattering to those who wished to push their way in the world; but he did not think the English Ministry were inclined to adopt it."—Then abruptly turning towards Edward, he said, "Have you any hopes of farther promotion, Mr. Fortescue?"

"I really

“ I really cannot resolve your question, Sir,” he replied, “ though I am inclined to believe the British Ministry can both discern and reward merit, when even unsupported by either birth or fortune ; as there have been several instances this war, of their generously overlooking the want of both in some of the Officers they have promoted. I have at all events a great honour in store for me ; for I am to accompany Lord —— to St. James’s to-morrow, as he thinks it necessary I should be presented to our beloved Monarch ; and much as I am really flattered by the proposal, I most sincerely wish he had excused my attendance, for I can suppose what an insignificant being I shall appear in the eyes of many present. That, however, would not give me much concern ; but as I am so unacquainted with the necessary etiquette upon such occasions, and so unprovided in point of clothes, I am afraid I shall appear, if not deficient in respect, at all events unusually awkward. But his Lordship over-ruled all
my

my objections, and even commanded me not to break any tailor's rest through my attention to appearances, as my old uniform would answer every purpose. I had therefore no alternative but to promise to attend him at the appointed time; so if excuses are necessary, his Lordship must take them upon himself."

"I only wonder, my young friend, you should wish to be excused," replied the Sheriff, who, like his brother, could appreciate the superior skill, bravery, and talents of the Lieutenant; "for can you, who, sword in hand, boarded the *Mutius Scævola*, dread being presented to the most gracious Monarch now reigning in Europe? The services you have rendered your country, are the most refined compliments you can pay; and from the courtiers you will experience nothing but politeness."

"That is the very thing, Sir, which will embarrass me most," replied Edward, "for I am sensible a Court neither is, nor ever will be my element. I never could compliment

pliment in my life, therefore I foresee I shall not shine in my answers to what will be said to me."

The Sheriff laughed, and said, "I have a mind to see how you will acquit yourself, therefore I will attend the levee myself. My brother, I know, will be anxious to hear all that passes upon the occasion; and though you will have an introducer of more consequence, you will have no objection to return with me."

"How much I feel myself obliged to you, Sir, for thus deigning publicly to notice a mere sailor of fortune! You will certainly write my best friend a much better account of my first appearance at St James's, than I shall."

"Who knows but you may receive the honour of Knighthood, Sir?" interrupted Downing, with a sort of sneer.

"I shall not mind what I undergo, if I am not treated with impertinence," replied Edward.

Not liking the turn the conversation had taken, Mr. Bloomfield observed it was
time

time to think of setting off; telling Fortescue that his wife, daughter, and Mr. Downing had agreed to go to a new play—and requesting him to be of the party.”

“It will be a greater treat to you, Mr. Fortescue, than to us; you must accompany us,” said Mrs. Bloomfield.

Maria said nothing, but Edward thought he read in her looks it would not be disagreeable to her, therefore he acceded to the proposal.

Mr. Bloomfield said he was not fond of plays; and William had an engagement of long standing, which he could not break.

Downing looked very silly, his low spite having, as before, literally failed, and took no notice of the arrangements going forward; but the Sheriff's coach having been ordered, the two ladies, himself, and Edward proceeded to Covent Garden.

END OF VOL. I.



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